

PLUCK AND LUCK

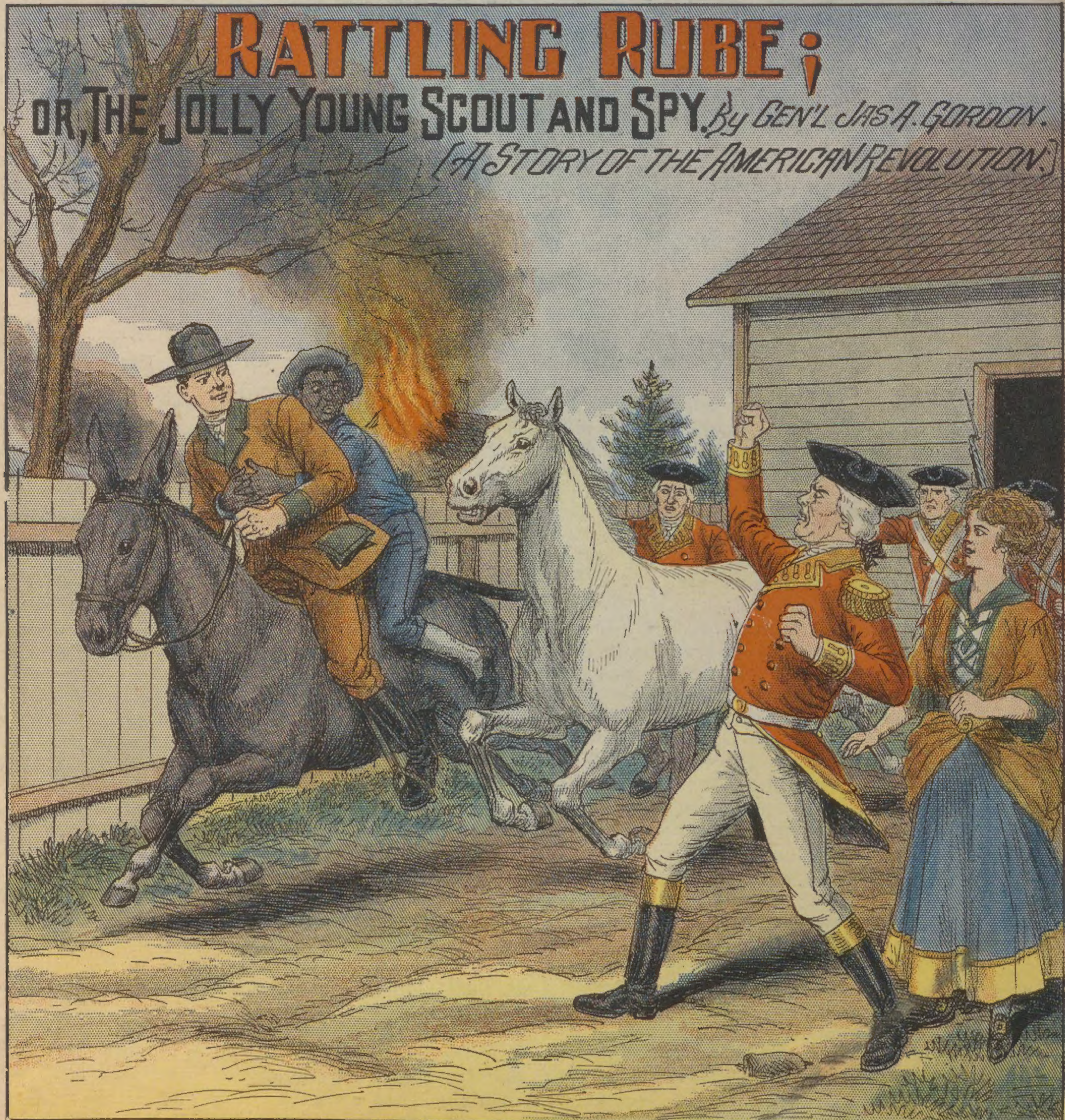
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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RATTLING RUBE

OR,

The Jolly Young Scout and Spy

(A STORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.)

BY GEN'L JAMES A. GORDON.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD TORY AND HIS DAUGHTER.

During the war for independence there stood on the south bank of the James river, a few miles below Richmond, a large farmhouse. All around it were well-tilled acres of rich land. The over-flowing barn, to say nothing of the comforts in the house, evinced the presence of a skilled farmer. There was nothing of a careless, slipshod nature to be seen about the place. The wagons and gear were always in good repair, and the stock looked sleek and fat.

Old David Bosworth was considered one of the best, as well as richest farmers along the James river. With a force of over one hundred slaves to till his land, his crop of wheat, corn, and tobacco was large, and at Richmond he found a ready market for anything he desired to sell.

It was but natural that a man like Farmer Bosworth should have some influence among his neighbors, and such was the case. But his popularity, at the time of which we write, was sadly on the wane.

Never at any time a real patriot, he had, a year previous to the opening of our story, declared in favor of the king, and pronounced the war a wicked rebellion.

Of course, after that, his patriot neighbors shunned him, and those who did not were suspected of sharing his views to a greater or less degree.

There were not a few, however, who did agree with him, and his position, after it became known, drew them to him in a close intimacy.

The Bosworth family was composed of husband, wife, and three children.

The eldest was a son, Eugene Bosworth, who was just two-and-twenty years old at the opening of our story, which begins in January, 1781—a brave, handsome, young man, tall, straight, and athletic. He was a captain under Lord Cornwallis, then engaged in the campaign against Greene down in the Carolinas.

The other two children were girls.

Mabel, the elder, was tall like her brother, and very dark,

with lustrous black eyes, raven tresses and pearly teeth—a queenly beauty in form and features. She was two years younger than her brother, and two older than her sister Myrtis.

Of a very different type of beauty was Myrtis.

She was short and fair, with laughing blue eyes and pale golden hair. Yet she was none the less beautiful. Had she cared to she could be a dangerous rival to her more regal-looking sister.

But they were not only sisters, but the best of friends, and loved each other as such.

On the night of January 3, 1781, the Bosworth family was seated before the glowing log-fire in the sitting-room of the farm-house.

It was a very cold night.

The wind howled around the house like a weird demon, causing the two sisters to clasp each other's hands, as if to seek mutual protection there.

"This is an awful night for the soldiers who are exposed to the cold," remarked Mrs. Bosworth, to her husband, who sat on the opposite side of the wide hearth, smoking a pipe.

"Yes, indeed," he replied, "and many a poor man will lose his life from exposure. It is a wicked, very wicked war our people are waging against the good king."

"Yes, so it is," sighed the mother, "and I hope and pray that it may end before our dear boy falls a victim to it."

"Ah! that's what makes me feel so bitter against the rebels," and the old farmer shook the ashes from his pipe with a sort of angry energy. "Our only son is forced to expose himself to death in a thousand shapes, all because there is a wicked rebellion in the land. But it won't last much longer. The king's troops will triumph, and treason be punished as it ought to be."

"Will the rebels be punished when the war ends, father?" Myrtis asked, looking up with an innocent expression on her sweet face.

"Of course they will. When did England ever fail to punish rebels if she got hold of them? Yes, Washington and all the leaders will lose their heads, as sure as the king's troops triumph."

"Then I hope the king will not triumph," said Mabel, speaking for the first time on the subject.

"Mabel!" gasped her father, utterly astonished.

"Daughter!" exclaimed Mrs. Bosworth, dropping her knitting in her lap, and gazing over her spectacles at her eldest daughter.

"Are you tainted with treason, too?" her father demanded.

"No, father, I am not tainted with treason," Mabel replied, "but I am not one who believes that the king can do no wrong."

"Well, on my soul! That is on the very edge of treason!" exclaimed her father. "You don't think the king has done wrong, do you?"

"Yes, father, I do," she firmly replied.

Old David Bosworth was amazed.

He glared at his beautiful daughter in almost speechless surprise.

It was the first time he had ever heard her utter a sentiment that savored of disloyalty to the king.

"The king can do no wrong," said her father, when he regained his speech. "That's one of the strong points of British law."

"My dear father," said Mabel, "that is the weakest point you could make, even when talking to an idiot, which you are not," and she smiled as she spoke, as if she believed she had knocked her venerable progenitor out completely.

"Why, daughter, you are half rebel, to say the least!" gasped her father. "Why, it's an axiom of British law that the king can do no wrong, and wise men made the laws of England."

"Father, the king is human, like any other man, and history teems with incidents where kings and queens were murderers and tyrants. King George did wrong in not heeding the remonstrances of the colonies, and the result is war. I have been thinking a great deal lately, and have come to the conclusion that the wrong of this cruel war does not lie all on one side."

The father and mother of the young lady glared at her in half-stupefied amazement. They had never given her any credit for taking the least interest in politics, as they had never heard her say anything about the merits of the quarrel between the king and the colonies.

"Myrtis, my child," said the father, turning to his younger daughter, "are you a rebel, too?"

"No, father; neither is sister one," replied Myrtis. "She thinks our people are not to blame altogether."

Mabel smiled, and pressed her sister's hand, which she held in her own.

"Don't be uneasy, father," she said, laughing. "I am not going to run away to join Washington, and fight against my brother."

A frown gathered on the old man's brow, and it was easy to see that he was displeased.

But Mabel Bosworth was not the girl to be frightened by a frown. She could not repress a smile, as she looked up at the cloud on her father's face.

"Where did you get your rebel ideas from, daughter?" the old man asked, after a pause of several minutes.

For answer the beautiful girl tapped her forehead with her finger, and said:

"Here, father, where a little common sense is still left."

That was too much for the ardent old Tory, and he was about to explode, when the sound of a horse's feet coming at full speed along the road in front of the house was heard.

The horse seemed to stop at the gate, and, while the old man was making up his mind to go out and see who it was, a loud knocking at the front door was heard.

Then he sprang up and went forward to open the door, and

the two sisters clung to each other's hand as if seeking mutual protection.

CHAPTER II.

"RATTLING RUBE."

Mr. Bosworth opened the front door of his hospitable home and looked out into the dim starlight of that cold January night.

To his surprise he saw a young man standing on the threshold, clad in a greatcoat, such as was used by the country people in that section in those days.

"Come in," he said to the newcomer, throwing the door wide open. "Come in to the fire. It's a very cold night, sir."

"Ah, you may well say that, Mr. Bosworth," said the young man, as he stepped inside and advanced toward the great heap of glowing coals in the broad, old-fashioned fireplace.

Then he caught a glimpse of the mother and two daughters, and doffing his hat, he made a bow that charmed them with its easy gracefulness.

"Pardon my intrusion, ladies," he said, bowing again to each of them. "These are times when sudden visits may be expected, and——"

"Your name is Reuben Rattling, is it not?" the old farmer asked, interrupting him, after scrutinizing him closely for a moment or two.

"Yes, sir—that's my name," he replied, turning and bowing to the father, hat in hand.

"I thought so," was the curt rejoinder. "To what are we indebted for the honor of your visit to-night?"

There was a cold stiffness in the old man's air and tones, which plainly showed that he was not pleased by any means.

"I am on my way to Richmond," replied Rattling, "to carry the news that Benedict Arnold, the traitor, is coming up the river with a large force, and——"

"Ah, say you so? Is it true?" exclaimed David Bosworth, greatly excited over the news.

"Yes, sir, it is true, for I have seen them myself. They will reach here to-morrow morning."

"Thank God!" muttered the old Tory, which the young man pretended not to hear.

"I thought it my duty to stop at every house on the road and give the alarm," Rattling continued, "and that's why I knocked at your door."

"Yes—yes—you did right. I am glad you did so. When do you say they will be here?"

"A little after sunrise, I should say—seeing there's nothing to stop 'em."

"Ah!" and the old Tory rubbed his hands with delight. "How many soldiers do you think he has with him?"

"About two thousand, I think—mostly Tories," replied the young man, "and they are the worst set that ever set foot on Virginia soil."

"Tut—tut, young man! You are prejudiced, perhaps."

"I know I am. When you see them land and begin plundering and burning as they do, you will be prejudiced, too."

"But when the law punishes treason, you should be prejudiced against the traitors, not against the law."

"That's sound doctrine, sir," said Rattling. "But when Law undertakes to crush Justice, I can't help lending her a helping hand. Justice is always right, which can't be said of law."

The old Tory was cornered, and his eldest daughter saw it, and gave a smile that caused him to frown and say:

"Treason and justice never go hand-in-hand, young man."

"I am not sure of that, sir," was the prompt reply. "If I

serve the devil like a faithful sinner a long time, you Christian people urge me to revolt and make war on him, and——"

Mabel burst into a silvery laugh, and said:

"Father, you see there are two sides to every question. Please allow me to ask Mr. Rattling if he would like a cup of coffee. He has had a cold ride to-night."

"Ah!" said the young man, turning and bowing to her, "in peace or war woman remains the same faithful friend to man."

"At any rate," said Mabel, laughing pleasantly, "the war has not made me forget the rules of hospitality. Will you be seated, sir, and——"

The sudden rush of horses' feet on the hard, frozen ground outside caused all five to glance quickly around at each other.

Then the horses stopped at the gate, and the voices of men were heard approaching the house.

A few moments later loud knocks on the door were heard.

The farmer opened it, and three men stood on the threshold.

Without waiting to be invited to enter, they dashed in and looked around at the inmates with inquiring glances.

"Have you heard the news?" one of them asked, turning to the old farmer.

"Yes—I hear that the king's troops are coming up the river."

"So they are, and that traitor Arnold is burning the houses of all the patriots on both banks."

"That is one of the evils of war the rebels did not count on when they rebelled against the king."

"Oh, it's a game that both sides can play. We know you to be a Tory, David Bosworth."

"I am loyal to my king, if that is what you mean," the farmer said.

"Yes, that's what we mean. You are a king's man, and believe it is right to burn down the homes of the patriots. We will give you a taste of that kind of warfare," and with that the man sprang forward to the hearth, and snatched up a burning brand from the fire.

The other two started to follow his example, when young Rattling quickly drew a brace of pistols and covered two of them.

"Stop where you are!" he sternly ordered. "Move a hand or foot and I'll fire!"

The two men stood like statues, glaring at the black muzzles of the pistols.

"I am a patriot," said the young man, "and have been nearly four years fighting the enemies of my country. But I make no war on women and old men. If you burn the house to-night, it will be after you have disposed of me. Such work will do for Tories and redcoats, but men who fight for liberty and justice ought to be ashamed of it!"

"It's Rattling Rube, as I live!" gasped one of the men, recognizing the young man for the first time.

"Yes—they call me Rattling Rube," he said, "and if you go to doing any dirty work round here I'll rattle your bones quicker than a flash of lightning."

"Why, don't you know the traitor is burning the house of every patriot along the river?" one of the men asked.

"Yes; I know it full well, and we all condemn it as the work of fiends. We are patriots, not devils!"

"But it's the only way to make 'em stop it."

"No, sir. It will not justify them in what they do. These ladies will not be turned out into the cold to-night. Go back to your horses, and hasten to Richmond. We will make a stand there for the defense of the city."

The men made no movement to go, and Rattling Rube hissed:

"If you don't leave at once I will fire!"

They all three started to the door at once.

Rube followed them out into the yard, and covered them

with his pistols till they remounted their horses and rode away.

Then he replaced his weapons under his coat and went back into the house.

"If you please," he said, bowing to Mabel—"if you please, I will take that cup of coffee, and then leave you."

"Yes, sir—you deserve a thousand cups of coffee!" exclaimed Mabel.

"I hardly know how to thank you, sir," said David Bosworth. "You have saved my home and family by your brave conduct."

"You need not thank me, sir. General Washington condemns such a cowardly mode of warfare. Your good King George approves it. If I could set fire to the king's palace and roast him alive it would serve him right for what his troops are doing to-night."

The old farmer made no reply to such strong language, and his good wife, very much frightened at what had occurred, said:

"Whatever the king's troops may do, sir, we shall not forget your brave conduct to-night."

"You have a son who is a captain in the king's army, I believe, ma'am?"

"Yes, sir, we have."

"Then tell him to never use the torch. It is the weapon of cowards, ma'am."

"Our boy is not a coward, sir," said the father, promptly. "He has been promoted for bravery on the battlefield."

"I am glad to hear that, sir. A brave man will never allow the home of his enemy to be burnt down. I would defend a woman anywhere—everywhere, with my life, because she is a woman."

Mabel Bosworth came in from the kitchen, whither she had been to see about the cup of coffee, in time to hear the young patriot's remarks.

"Ah, those are the words of a hero!" she exclaimed, and the next moment, as if ashamed of her impulsiveness, she blushed red as a rose, and ran back into the kitchen.

Myrtis was timid as a young fawn, but she thought she ought to thank the young patriot for what he had done, and so she turned to him and said:

"We thank you ever so much, sir; and—and—I am sorry you are a rebel."

Rube laughed right out.

"Thank you for the compliment, young lady. When I look down the river and see the heavens illumined by the light of dwellings set on fire by the king's troops, I thank God I am a rebel! Ah, here comes my coffee!"

Mabel brought it in herself, and placed it on a table in the middle of the room.

"A thousand thanks, Miss Bosworth," said Rube, as he took up the delicious beverage and sipped it. "I assure you we get nothing like this in camp."

He drank the coffee, and again thanking them he bowed himself out, mounted his horse and dashed away toward Richmond.

CHAPTER III.

RATTLING RUBE AND THE MAIDEN'S HORSE.

On the morning of the 4th of January, 1781, Benedict Arnold, the traitor, landed, at the head of nearly 2,000 British and Tories, a few miles below Richmond.

The patriots along the river fled before him in terror-stricken haste, for they knew that he was more cruel than the British themselves.

Every house whose owner was believed to be a patriot was burnt to the ground, and everything of value about the farm destroyed.

It was a day of terror to the patriots, who fled toward Richmond to escape worse treatment at the hands of the enemy.

Rattling Rube urged his horse at the top of his speed, and hastened on to warn the citizens of the city of their danger.

The three men who had gone on ahead of them were simply flying from danger themselves, and so they did not make direct for the city, as they should have done. On the contrary, they went out of the way to stop at several places, where they spent several hours of precious time.

Our hero, however, had been a scout for three years, and knew what his duty was under such circumstances; hence he lost no time, after leaving the Bosworths, in getting to the city.

The first man he met on entering the city was a solitary watchman, to whom he told the news.

The watchman spread the story as fast as he could, and our hero hastened on to military headquarters to make his report.

In less than an hour's time the whole population had heard the news, and the most intense excitement prevailed.

The deep-seated hatred of the people against Benedict Arnold, the traitor, filled their minds with the idea that the dislike was mutual, and that he would be as merciless in his hate as any redskin was ever known to be.

Of course, the small military force then in the city was at once marshaled for its defense.

In the meantime other patriots came in from below with bloodcurdling tales of fiendish barbarity experienced at the hands of the invaders.

A little after sunrise the commandant of the post—a cool, calculating man, who never lost his head in moments of great excitement—called our hero into his private office and said to him:

"Mr. Ratling, you seem to be the only man who has not been frightened by this invasion."

"I have seen too many such to be easily frightened, sir," said Rube.

"So I suppose. Now, I want a cool-headed man like you to go back down the river and see just how many men the traitor has with him, how they are armed, and what they purpose doing. Will you go?"

"Yes, sir," was the prompt reply of the brave young man.

"Very well. Do you need anything before starting?"

"No, sir."

"When can you start?"

"Right now, sir."

"That's the right kind of talk. I will bid you good-by and wish you Godspeed," and the officer arose and extended his right hand to him.

Rube shook his hand, and then left the house to go at once to his duty.

He had his horse, and in a little while he was on his way down the river, keeping on the south side.

As he progressed he met scores of patriots flying from the enemy.

"They will murder you," said one patriot to him as he came by. "Better go back."

"No danger," said our hero, "as I am not going to let 'em get their hands on me."

"Hello, Rube!" cried a patriot who knew him. "You are going the wrong way."

"No, I am going the right way," he replied. "The enemy is down this way."

"The thunder you say! You are not going to meet the whole British army, are you?"

"Yes, that's just what I am going to do," was the quiet reply.

"Well, somebody ought to lock you up."

"Oh, that's not the way to do in times like these," said Rube. "Suppose everybody were to run away whenever the enemy came, how would Washington drive them out of the country?"

"But you are not going to fight 'em?"

"I don't know. If I get a chance to shoot that traitor I'll do it, if I am shot down the next moment myself."

Others coming up our hero passed on, anxious to get down near the enemy as soon as possible.

When he arrived in the vicinity of the Bosworth farm he found the enemy plundering and burning in every direction.

The Bosworth house was not reduced to ashes simply because the arch-traitor had taken up temporary headquarters there.

But the farm was plundered of everything of value. The stock was run off, the tobacco stored was captured, and the provisions consumed.

Old David Bosworth, in a terrible rage, appealed to Arnold for protection.

"I am a loyal man, general," he said, "and my only son is an officer in the king's army under Lord Cornwallis. I demand protection for my property."

"You shall have it, sir," said Arnold. "I didn't know your property was suffering," and he immediately sent an officer to put a stop to the devastation that was going on.

But the mischief had been done; the farm was stripped of almost everything of value.

Mabel Bosworth had gone out to the barn with the determination of saving her favorite horse at all hazards.

She found a Tory in the red uniform of Britain on his back.

"You shall not take my horse, sir," she said, in very determined tones. "My father is loyal to the king, and his property ought to be protected."

"But you say this is your horse," said the Tory. "Are you loyal, too?"

She looked hard at him for a minute or two, and said:

"When I see such creatures as you in that uniform, my allegiance to the king gets very weak."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed a jolly, hearty voice behind her. "That is a hard slap, comrade! Get down and leave the lady her horse. Our cause will suffer if we plunder friend and foe alike. Come with me, and I will lead you to a rebel's house, where we can get more than we can carry off."

Mabel turned round quickly to see who the speaker was, and was amazed at seeing Rattling Rube standing close behind her in a very dilapidated garb, holding a mule by the bit.

"Who are you?" the Tory demanded, glaring at the ragged youth.

"I'm a rank pizen loyal man," was the reply.

"Why don't you join us, then?"

"I will—right away—an' do the pesky rebels mischief enough to last 'em a lifetime. Miss Bosworth here knows I'm a rank pizen loyal king's man."

"Yes," said Mabel very promptly, blushing red as a rose. "There's none more loyal than he."

"Well, that's all right," said the Tory. "I'm going to have this horse and that nigger to look after him. He'll make the best charger in the army," and the red-coated villain designated the horse Mabel claimed and the black who had always attended to him.

"Better leave the lady's horse here," suggested Rube.

"No; I know a good horse when I see him," said the Tory, "and I am going to have him."

The negro had the bridle of the horse in his hand. Rube turned and whispered to him:

"Will the horse follow you?"

"Yes, sah."

"Then spring up behind me on the mule when I mount and call to the horse."

"Yes, sah."

By this time there were but three redcoats in the barnyard.

Watching his chance, Rube mounted the mule.

The negro sprang up behind him and called to the horse:

"Come heah, sah!"

The horse dashed forward, nearly knocking the redcoat down, and came alongside of the mule.

Rube put spurs to the mule, and away he dashed through the open gate.

The redcoats tried to stop him, but he went through them like a thunderbolt, followed by the faithful horse, and sped away up the road like a whirlwind.

CHAPTER IV.

ARNOLD MEETS HIS MATCH.

Once outside the gate, our hero plunged a huge pair of diabolical spurs into the sides of the mule with such force as to make him believe that nothing but an instantaneous and rapid flight could save him from utter destruction.

That obstreperous animal laid his ears back on his attenuated neck, and gave a vicious twirl of his tail. Then his heels flew out like streaks of lightning, and the next moment he was away like the wind.

The whoop of the redcoats in the barnyard, however, had served to give the alarm to those outside. They saw the mule coming with his double load on his back, and the splendid animal at his side coming at full speed, and could not refrain from an explosion of laughter.

The double load on his back, the terrible spurs, and the shouts of the redcoats had utterly demoralized the son of a donkey. But a nameless terror had also taken possession of his muleship, which created in him a longing desire to run a race with a streak of forked lightning. "Halt—halt—halt!"

A half dozen redcoats blocked the roadway, and presented six bristling bayonets to bar further progress.

"God save the king!" cried Rube, for the purpose of disconcerting the redcoats.

"Look out, dar!" yelled the negro at the top of his voice, as he saw the glistening bayonets turned toward the mule. "We'se ercomin'!"

The mule came toward the redcoats with such impetuosity that they saw he would land on their bayonet points, and on them also if they stood their ground.

When hearing Rube shout "God save the king," they came to the conclusion that he was a loyal man on an obstreperous mule, and sprang aside to let him pass.

As he flew past them, the mule threw out both heels, in the mad hope of destroying those terrible spurs at one kick, and landed one on the shoulder of one of the redcoats.

The man was knocked out of active service for a month, and the mule went on his way as if he intended to make the circuit of the globe on time with the sun.

In another moment he was out of sight up the road.

"Why didn't you stop him?" demanded one of the Tories in the barnyard.

"Couldn't without shooting him," was the reply.

"Why didn't you shoot him?"

"Shoot a loyal man!"

"Why, he is a rebel."

"Eh? What's that you say?"

"He is a rebel, and has gone off with the best horse in Virginia."

"Whew! Why didn't you shoot him, then? You were in there with him."

"He was too quick for me. I thought he could never get through so many of you."

"Well, we thought he was a loyal man, and didn't want to shoot him. Are you sure he is a rebel?"

The Tory appealed to turned around and gave Mabel Bosworth a look.

"Wasn't he a rebel?" he asked.

"How do I know, sir? Rebel or not, I would rather he have my horse than such brutes as you all seem to be."

"On my soul!" exclaimed a burly sergeant, "she is a rebel, too, of the rankest kind."

"My father is well known in all this part of the country as a true, loyal king's man," she said, flashing her eyes indignantly. "But if he remains one after this visit of the king's troops, he will deserve to be stripped of everything he has in the world."

"Don't you know that it's the duty of all loyal men to contribute all they can to promote the good cause?" the sergeant asked.

"Yes; but I didn't know it was the duty of the king's troops to plunder friend and foe alike. No, sir—up to this hour I was loyal at heart—but now I can go down on my knees and pray that God will enable the rebels to drive the king's army out of America. They are a band of base villains, led by one of the blackest renegades that ever disgraced the uniform of a Christian nation!"

Mabel Bosworth was grandly beautiful as she rose to her full height and hurled defiance at the cowardly wretches.

She was astonished that she heard no reply to her hot words. As she gazed around at them she noticed that they were looking at someone directly behind her.

Turning quickly, she found herself face to face with a man in the uniform of a British general.

His keen eyes were riveted on her flushed face.

But she was not one to quail before any earthly power or rank.

"Who is this young lady?" the general asked, turning to one of the soldiers nearby.

"She is the daughter of the owner of this place, I believe, general," replied the soldier.

"Is that so?" he asked, turning to Mabel.

"Yes, sir. Mr. Bosworth is my father. He is a loyal man; yet he has been plundered as if he were an enemy to the king."

"That has been stopped," said the traitor, for it was Benedict Arnold himself.

"I see it has, since nothing remains to be appropriated," she replied, sarcastically.

"You do not understand the nature of war, young lady."

"No, sir; not when it is waged by brutes," and with that she drew her skirts more closely about her, and attempted to pass him and return to the house.

"You had better put a curb on your tongue, miss," said the traitor, very sternly, as he stepped aside to let her pass.

"Renegades must not presume to advise respectable people," she retorted, as she passed.

Arnold flushed to the temples, and would have replied in language equally severe, had not an incident occurred to call his attention in another direction.

That incident was one that occurred quite often during the war, but in this case it had more than usual significance.

It was simply the whistling of a bullet close by the ear of Benedict Arnold, as he stood there in the barnyard talking to the indignant Mabel Bosworth.

The traitor turned pale as death as he heard it.

He was not a coward, save in a moral sense, for when he

fought under the American flag he was regarded by both armies as a brave, reckless, daring officer.

But he knew with what intense hatred he was now regarded by the patriots, and with what satisfaction they would welcome the news of his death. He knew that thousands would eagerly seek to avenge the great wrong he had done his country; hence the whistle of a single bullet close to his head, when there were no others flying about, denoted the presence of an implacable avenger somewhere in his immediate vicinity.

Pale as a sheet, instead of answering the denunciation of Mabel Bosworth, the traitor turned to some of the soldiers, and said:

"Charge that piece of woods, and kill any man found in there!"

A dozen redcoats under the sergeant dashed forward toward the woods, and in a couple of minutes were out of sight.

The traitor turned, and walked slowly back into the house, whither Mabel had preceded him.

Old David Bosworth met him at the door.

"Do you know your daughter is a rebel, sir?" Arnold asked of the old Tory, as he stepped into the house.

"No, sir; I did not know it."

"Well, she is. She denounces the king and all his followers."

"My God!" gasped the old farmer. "She must be mad!"

"She was very mad about the conduct of my men, and gave me a piece of her mind in language not in the least complimentary."

"Mabel! Mabel!" called David Bosworth, in loud tones, "come here!"

Mabel heard him in another room, and came out and stood by his side.

"Daughter, you have done wrong. You have insulted the general of the king's army, and must apologize to him. Tell him you did not mean it!"

"Apologize to him—a traitor and renegade?" indignantly exclaimed the high-spirited young maiden. "And do you thus insult me, my father?"

David Bosworth was nearly paralyzed by her words and angry looks. For a minute or two he was utterly speechless.

"Daughter! daughter!" he stammered.

"Enough, father," she said, interrupting him. "I will retire," and ere a word could be said to prevent, she had left the room, and left her father and the arch-traitor alone together.

Arnold was utterly crushed in spirit, for the contemptuous flash of the maiden's eyes told but too plainly that his name would thus be execrated in all ages.

CHAPTER V.

RATTLING RUBE IN PERIL.

As he dashed through the little knot of redcoats in the road, on the mule, with the negro mounted behind him, Rattling Rube expected to hear bullets whistling about his ears.

To his utter astonishment not a shot was fired at him.

His cry of "God save the king!" had saved him instead, and the moment he was out of range he could not refrain from indulging in a chuckle of gleeful satisfaction.

"Yah—yah, massa!" laughed the negro behind him, "we'se done got clar ob dem sojers, shuah."

"Yes; they could have shot us, but they didn't. They are as big fools as rascals."

"Dat's er fac', marse. Dey didn't git young missus' hoss, neider."

"No. Do you belong to Mr. Bosworth?"

"Yes, sah, I 'longs to Marse David."

"Miss Mabel loves her horse, does she not?"

"De Lor' bless yer, marse!" exclaimed the negro, "Miss Mabel lubs dat hoss like all creation, an' de hoss lubs her, too."

"What's the horse's name?"

She calls him Breeze, sah."

"Ah! He's a very fast horse, then, is he?"

"Yes, sah—run like de wind."

"What's your name?"

"Pete, sah."

"You have been attending to the horse?"

"Yes, sah."

"That's all right. You can attend to him yet, and I'll attend to you. I am a friend of Miss Mabel's, and intend to see that she shall have her horse again. Do you know me?"

"Yes, sah—dey all know Marse Rube Rattling."

"All right, Pete. You may get down now and take charge of Breeze and this mule."

"Yes, sah," and the negro slid to the ground and took charge of the horse.

Rube dismounted also, and turned the mule over to Pete.

"Now, Pete," he said, "I am going to go back down there and see what those rascally redcoats are up to."

"De Lor' sabe us, marse! Dey'll shoot yer, shuah."

"Yes, if they get the chance, but I won't let 'em do that. You go into the swamp, up the river, where the creek comes in, and hide in there with the horse and mule, and wait till I come. I won't be gone longer than I can help."

"Yes, sah," and Pete led the horse and mule away, leaving the young man to pursue his way back down the road in the direction of the Bosworth farm.

"I would like to get a chance to draw a bead on that traitor," said Rube to himself, as he turned into the woods. "It would do the cause more good than a big victory. The rascal ought to be shot down on sight."

Creeping through the woods, Rube made his way to a hollow log, where he stopped and cautiously looked around.

Seeing no one in sight, he stooped and ran his hand into an opening in the log, and drew forth a rifle and powder-horn.

"Ah, my faithful friend," he said, as he examined the weapon, "I am always safe when we are together. We will look around now, and see if there is any work to be done."

Shouldering his rifle, he put out for the Bosworth farm, and in a little while was back in the edge of the woods near the barn, whence he had but a half hour before escaped with Mabel's horse and the negro Pete.

To go beyond the limits of the wood at that time was to tempt fate.

Our hero saw Mabel standing near the gate, talking to one in the uniform of a British general, and was puzzled to know who it was.

"Why, that must be Arnold himself!" he mentally exclaimed, as he glared at the man. "I have a mind to shoot him down as he stands there. America will be avenged, and Rattling Rube will be known as the man who did it. But I won't shoot him down right before her eyes. I will wait till she goes away. What a beautiful girl she is!"

As he stood there glaring out from the clump of bushes that concealed him from view, Rube was as much engrossed by the lovely maiden as by the arch-traitor himself.

But he held his finger on the trigger of his faithful rifle, ready to fire at any moment.

"Just let him get five paces from her side, and Benedict Arnold will feel the vengeance of the patriots of America."

Rube was nervous, and his hand trembled in spite of himself. He was about to shoot down the arch enemy of his country, a man who had won renown in the ranks of the pa-

triot army. It is not to be wondered at that his hand did tremble under the circumstances.

Suddenly he saw Mabel Bosworth turn away from the traitor, and go in the direction of the house.

He saw Arnold look sternly after her, as if about to speak to her.

Now was the moment.

He raised his rifle, took a quick aim, and pulled the trigger.

The bullet sped within an inch of Benedict Arnold's ear.

"Good Lord!" gasped Rube, "I've missed him. When I could have shot a sparrow's head off at that distance!"

He heard the traitor give the order to the sergeant to charge the wood, and kill whoever he found there.

Quick as a flash he turned and ran back into the woods as fast as his heels could carry him.

The sergeant, at the head of his men, rushed forward, and in another minute the redcoats were in the woods, ready to send bullets after him the moment they caught sight of him.

Just as he was about to pass out of the woods on the further side, Rube saw a party of redcoats coming from an opposite direction. Quick as a flash he saw he was in danger of getting between two fires, and that the discovery of his presence would be the signal for his death.

What to do was a problem for a moment or two, and then he turned and darted away toward the log where he had once concealed his rifle.

Into that he crept with the agility of a rabbit, and there he lay at full length, listening to his pursuers.

They came by the log—some of them sat on it and looked all about.

They had not seen him—no one had seen him. They had only heard the report of his rifle.

They were not woodsmen enough to follow his trail to the log. In fact, they did not even see it; and so, as they sat there on the log, they wondered what had become of the man who had shot at the general.

Rube heard them talking, and knew that his presence in the log was not suspected.

Suddenly, however, a horror seized upon him.

A peculiar sensation in his nose told him that he was about to sneeze.

He tried to suppress it. The more he tried the more it wouldn't be suppressed, and so it came with an explosion that startled the redcoats.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTURED.

On hearing the sneeze inside the log the redcoats sprang to their feet, and glared at each other.

"He's in the log!" exclaimed one.

The sergeant examined the entrance to the hollow of the log, and saw the trail very plainly.

"So you are in there, are you?" he called to our hero.

"Yes, of course I am," replied Rube, who saw that it was no use to keep silent and have a bayonet thrust in at him.

"Well, s'pose you come out."

"Thank you, I believe I will," he answered, and he left his rifle in the log and crawled out, feet foremost.

"Ah, I have seen you before!" exclaimed the sergeant the moment he saw Rube's face.

"Yes, we've met before," said Rube. "How have you been, sergeant?"

The sergeant laughed in spite of himself.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"My name is Rattling."

"What did you run off with that horse for?"

"To save it for Miss Bosworth."

"But the king?"

"Oh, come now! The king didn't want him. No use saying he did. Besides, I would rather please my sweetheart than the king. His Gracious Majesty takes no notice of a poor man like me, and his sweetheart does."

The sergeant and all his comrades laughed heartily at the frank confession of the prisoner.

"What did you come back here in these woods for?"

Rube looked hard at him, and winked knowingly.

"Guess you've never been in love with a pretty girl, sergeant," he said, at which the others roared again.

"Where's your rifle?" the sergeant asked.

"Haven't got one," was the prompt reply.

"You haven't, eh?"

"No. Did you see me with one when I went off with the horse and mule?"

"No," said the sergeant, who was really puzzled at not finding him.

"Look in the log for a rifle," he finally said to one of his men. One of the redcoats crawled into the log and felt around with his hands.

Rube knew that if the rifle were found his death would be a question of but a few minutes. But he kept a quiet, pleasant face, and saw the man come out without the rifle.

"Nothing in there, sergeant," said the soldier, who had in some way managed to miss the gun in the darkness of the hollow.

"Then you didn't fire the shot we heard just now?" said the sergeant, turning to the prisoner.

"No; A nigger fired it."

The sergeant and all the redcoats were amazed.

"How do you know that?"

"I heard the shot, and then saw a nigger streaking it through the woods over there," and he pointed in the direction whence the shot had come.

The shot had created an intense excitement among the redcoats, and they were naturally eager to get hold of the one who had fired it. But Rube's story, told with such an air of sincerity, had its effect on the sergeant, and convinced him that the prisoner was not the guilty one.

"You must go with us," he said to Rube, and then he ordered two of his men to march him down to the house, while he and a few others continued the search for the negro.

Rube thanked his stars that his rifle had not been found, as it would have been an accusing instrument to bring about his death. He was marched down to the house, where the general and his staff gazed at him with angry frowns.

"Why is this man brought here?" Arnold demanded of the guards.

"The sergeant sent him, general," replied one of the men, saluting the arch-traitor.

"Take him away, and tell the sergeant to remember his orders."

The two guards faced about, and marched the prisoner back toward the woods.

Mabel Bosworth was at the window at the time, and overheard the stern words of Arnold.

She recollected what he had said to the sergeant—"to shoot any man found in the woods."

"Oh, heavens!" she muttered, her face growing deathly pale as she spoke. "It is he—that brave young Rattling—and they are going to murder him!"

She did not stop to think, but flew out of the house and ran like a fawn in the direction of the little party which had Rube in charge. The feeling that prompted her impulsive conduct was new to her, but she did not stop to analyze it.

Overtaking the guard just as they were re-entering the woods, she asked:

"What are you going to do with him? He is a loyal man."

"We are going to turn him over to the sergeant, miss," said one of the guard, "who has orders from the general."

Just then the sergeant came back from his unsuccessful search for the mythical negro.

"General Arnold sends us to you with this prisoner, sergeant," said the guard, "and bid me say to you to 'remember your orders.'"

The sergeant turned pale, and asked:

"Did General Arnold say that?"

"Yes, sergeant."

"Then, sir, I must obey orders. You are to be shot."

"What for?" Rube very coolly asked.

"Because the general orders it."

"But that is——"

"The first duty of a soldier is to obey orders," said the sergeant. "To disobey in this case might cause me to be shot in less than an hour."

"But had you been there to explain to the general, he would not have given such an order," said Rube.

"That may be so, but I have no discretion in the matter. Corporal, take four men and step back twelve paces."

The corporal obeyed promptly, and in another minute the four men were facing our hero with muskets in their hands, ready to fire at the word of command.

Mabel Bosworth was horror-stricken at what was about to take place. Rube was calm and cool, with but a slight pallor on his bronzed face.

"Soldiers!" she cried, suddenly regaining her voice, "this is a cruel murder, that will disgrace the king's cause throughout the civilized world!"

"You must not interfere in this thing, miss," said the sergeant. "War means death and desolation. Ready, corporal!"

"Ready, aim——"

"No—no!" shrieked Mabel, rushing forward and covering Rube with her body. "He shall not perish thus!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE ESCAPE.

The sudden movement of Mabel Bosworth disconcerted the soldiers. They lowered their muskets and stared in profound amazement at both her and the sergeant. The sergeant was not less surprised than they, and he forgot to scold them for not firing on the beautiful, daring girl.

But if the redcoats were astonished, Rube was astounded.

He was the most surprised of all, and for a moment or two knew not what to say.

"They shall not shoot you!" she said, as she entwined her arms around his neck.

"Miss Bosworth," said Rube, "you cannot save me. They are fiends sent to wreak vengeance on me for my devotion to my country. Your conduct touches my heart, and I will die regretting that we did not meet earlier. Leave me to my fate, or you may be subjected to bad treatment at their hands."

"No, no! They shall not murder you this way."

"Miss," said the sergeant, coming up to where they were standing, "it is useless to interfere thus with the orders of the general. You must go away."

"No, no, kill me, too! I will not leave him!" she cried.

"Corporal, take two men and remove her!" the sergeant commanded in very stern tones.

The corporal started toward her.

She turned and faced him like a tigress at bay.

"Touch me at your peril!" she cried, her lustrous black eyes flashing like diamonds.

The corporal reached forth his hand to seize her, when the keen crack of a rifle was heard in the woods on the right, and the next moment he clutched wildly at space and fell in a heap at her feet.

The effect was electrical.

"There are rebels in these woods," cried the sergeant, turning to his men. "Prepare to defend yourselves."

Crack! came another shot, and one of the redcoats bit the dust.

"Charge!" cried the sergeant, who was really a brave fellow. The soldiers charged in the direction of the spot whence the two shots had come.

The sergeant was at their head.

The prisoner for the moment was forgotten.

He was left alone with the brave girl who had saved him.

"Fly! fly!" she cried to him.

"You have saved my life," said Rube, throwing his arms around her waist and pressing her to his heart.

"Did you not save us all last night?" she asked, and then she again urged him to fly.

Pressing his lips to hers for a moment, he said:

"You shall have the life you have saved. I will come again," and with that he darted away.

"Saved! saved!" she murmured, and pressing a hand over her heart to still its wild throbbing, she leaned against a tree for support.

She felt weak and faintish.

But she summoned all her strength to her aid, and regained control of herself.

The redcoats, angered at the death of two of their number, rushed madly through the woods.

But they found no one.

Suddenly the sergeant bethought him of the prisoner.

"The prisoner!" he cried, "secure the prisoner."

They made a rush back to the spot where they had left him alone with the maiden.

There they found only the girl.

"Where is the prisoner?" the sergeant fiercely demanded of her.

"Gone," she replied.

"Quick! Search the woods!" exclaimed the sergeant. "Shoot him down! Don't take him alive!"

The men dispersed promptly, and searched eagerly for the daring young rebel.

Only the sergeant remained with the girl.

"You have brought trouble on yourself, miss," he said to her. "Your lover has escaped, but the general will inflict some awful punishment on you for what you have done."

"He is not my lover," she said. "I have no lover. He saved our lives last night when the rebels were flying from below, and to-day I have saved his. General Arnold may do his worst. I do not fear him. I defy him!"

"I am sorry to hear you talk so, miss," the sergeant said, "as it will go hard with you and your people."

"It can go no harder than it has already gone," she replied.

When the soldiers returned they reported that they had seen nothing of the prisoner.

"Then he has made his escape. Take charge of this young woman and march her to the house. I must make my report to General Arnold."

The soldiers placed themselves on either side of her, and started to march.

She walked along as dignifiedly as if she had merely an escort of honor, instead of a guard of enemies.

Arrived at the house, the sergeant went in to see and report to the general.

"The general has just left," said one of the staff, as the sergeant made inquiry for the general.

"Where? Which way?" the sergeant asked, now greatly excited with fears for himself.

"Toward Richmond. What do you want?"

"I have a prisoner here who——"

"Where?" and the young staff-officer looked around as if in search of a prisoner.

"This young woman here."

"What! Why, that is the daughter of our host!"

"That is true, captain," said the sergeant. "But she aided a prisoner we had to escape, and——"

"And you arrested her?"

"Yes, captain."

The young staff-officer, who was a great admirer of the sex, turned to Mabel, and added:

"What have you been doing, Miss Bosworth, to cause your arrest?"

"I simply interfered to save the life of a friend," she replied.

"They were going to shoot him, when I threw myself between him and his would-be murderers. A moment later they were fired on from the bushes, and in the excitement of the moment he made his escape. That's all I did."

The captain turned to the sergeant, and said:

"The enemy in the bushes were the ones to arrest, and not this lady. You may leave her here and join your command."

"Thank you, captain," said Mabel. "You are the only just man I have seen in that uniform to-day."

The sergeant was only too glad to get out of the scrape that way.

He left the house quickly, and made his way along the river road toward the city.

Mabel was surrounded by her parents and sister, and eagerly questioned as to her adventure with the soldiers.

"What have you done, my child?" her father asked. "I hope you have done nothing to bring the wrath of the general down on us."

"I don't know if I have, father," she answered. "I know that I have done right, and that is enough."

She then related the story of Rube's escape from certain death, and her subsequent arrest.

"You did right—he saved us last night," said Myrtis, her sister. "But it was such an adventure!" and the young girl threw her arms around her.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPY IN THE CAMP.

When Rattling Rube dashed away through the woods after having been saved from certain death by the interposition of the old Tory's daughter, he made all haste to get out of the way of the redcoats. They had gone mostly in one direction—the one they naturally supposed he would go under the circumstances. He went in the opposite direction, and was soon out of their way.

But he was not destined to get off without a struggle, for one of the redcoats had wandered off to that part of the woods, and was looking around, when he discovered our hero.

Quick as a flash he raised his musket and aimed at him.

Fortunately the powder flashed in the pan without exploding the gun, and before he could re-prime it Rattling Rube was upon him.

Grasping him by the throat, he forced him to drop the musket to defend himself.

That was just what Rube wanted. He threw the Tory from him and seized the musket.

"Help! Help!" yelled the redcoat, as Rube rushed upon him.

That was his last cry. The next moment the bayonet was thrust through his breast, and he sank down at the feet of his conqueror in the agonies of a horrible death.

In a few minutes Rube had gained a piece of timber, where he felt that he would be safe from the enemy for the time.

There he remained for upwards of an hour, after which time he crept back into the woods for the purpose of recovering his rifle and pistols.

"It was lucky they did not find them," he said, as he crawled into the log. "They would have shot me on the spot here had they done so. I'm in good luck to-day, anyhow. Miss Bosworth just took my breath away by her conduct. Lord! what a brave, beautiful woman she is! If I dared to, I—I—but it won't do; I must not love where I can't win. She saved my life in return for my saving her home the night before. I wonder who fired the shots that laid out the corporal and the other redcoat? That's a mystery I would like to solve. Maybe Miss Bosworth may know something about it. I will ask her some day, if I see her again."

He came out of the log and crept away through the bushes, keeping well out of sight as he did so.

Out on the main road he saw the redcoats marching toward Richmond, and then he thought of the mission he had been sent on by the commandant of the patriot forces in the city.

"I must hasten back to the city," he said, "and let the colonel know what I have seen."

He then made a detour to the right, and got in ahead of the enemy.

Seizing a horse which he found running loose, with bloodstains on the saddle, he mounted and set off for Richmond at the top of his speed.

Reaching the city, he found the greatest excitement prevailing, and the military authorities in no end of trouble.

The combined forces of the patriots in and around the city did not amount to more than one-half the force of the enemy.

The commandant was a cool-headed man, who strove hard to hold his own, but the terror created by the name of Arnold the traitor seemed to pervade the whole population. Many soldiers became demoralized, but it was more on account of the superiority of numbers on the part of the enemy than otherwise.

"Rattling," said the commandant to our hero, "go out and keep the enemy in sight—keeping me posted as to every movement he makes. You may take a dozen men with you as couriers; send me word every hour, if possible."

Rube lost no time in getting his men. They were brave, daring fellows, well armed and mounted, who were burning to get a shot at the arch-traitor himself.

In a couple of hours he was on his way down the river again at the head of his little band of scouts.

Of course, they did not go far before night came on, and darkness enshrouded the movements of redcoats and patriots alike.

"We must work our way down the river by the light of their campfires," said Rube to his comrades.

Rube made his way along the river road till he came in sight of the enemy's campfires. Then he halted and dismounted his men.

"Two of you remain in the woods here with the horses," he said. "The others come with me. I think we may be able to do them a little mischief."

With ten men he pushed across an old field and gained the rear of the camp.

The enemy well knew there was no force strong enough to oppose him in an open fight, hence he was not over-vigilant in camp.

Sentinels were out, but so many Tories in citizen's dress were allowed to mingle with the soldiers that it was an easy matter for our hero and his men to get in among them.

But he did not choose that but one should do so, and that one was himself.

"I am going over there," he said to his comrades, "and see what news I can pick up."

In a few minutes he had glided away in the dark, and left the scouts to wait for his return.

Under any other circumstances it would have been quite difficult for him to get into the camp. But it was well known that there was no force in all Virginia at that time that dared to face the arch-traitor in battle, and hence discipline was relaxed. The promiscuous plundering that was allowed also demoralized all discipline.

Rube was quick to perceive the state of affairs, and passed from one group to another, keeping well in the dark, and listened to much that was said.

Suddenly he ran across the sergeant who had held him as a prisoner that morning.

He knew the sergeant's voice, and so was on his guard as to his own voice.

The redcoat was talking to a party of his comrades about the attempt of the rebels to kill the general that morning down at the Bosworth farm.

"It was a strange thing," he said, "about that fellow we found in a hollow log. We found no weapons on him or with him, and yet I believe he was the chap who fired the shot," and then he repeated the story as the reader has already read it.

"Rattling!" repeated a Tory in a red coat. "What—that was Rattling Rube!"

"Who is Rattling Rube?" demanded the sergeant.

"The rankest rebel in Virginia, and the most daring scout in their service."

"Thunderation!" gasped the sergeant. "Then he was the man who fired that shot!"

"Of course he was."

"And he was saved from being shot by old Bosworth's pretty daughter. I believe the Bosworths are all rebels."

"Oh, no," said another. "David Bosworth is loyal. His son Eugene is a captain with Lord Cornwallis."

"Well, his daughter is rebel clear through. She called the general a renegade and traitor to his face."

"She did?"

"Yes; and said that our conduct had made her hate the name of the king."

That was news to our hero.

He was more than pleased at the news that Mabel was really in sympathy with the patriots. That he had been instrumental in saving her favorite horse he was glad of, and resolved to see if he could not gather news of the enemy's plans through her.

CHAPTER IX.

RUBE MAKES A CAPTURE.

Having heard the sergeant's story, Rube was about to turn away and pay a visit to the Bosworth farm, when an officer in a brilliant uniform came up to the place where he was stand-

ing. Every soldier round the campfire saluted him, and waited in respectful silence for him to speak.

"Is Sergeant Renfro here?" asked the officer, looking around.

"I am he, colonel," replied the sergeant, saluting the officer.

"Come with me; I want you."

The sergeant turned and followed the officer away in the darkness.

They passed within a few feet of Rattling Rube. Just beyond him was a large oak tree, under which they halted.

Quick as a flash Rube darted forward and secreted himself behind the tree.

The two men did not see him, nor even suspect his presence there.

"Sergeant," said the colonel, in a low tone of voice, "you had a young lady as prisoner this morning, did you not?"

"Yes, colonel."

"Why did you arrest her?"

"Because she aided a rebel prisoner to escape me."

"How did she do that?"

The sergeant related the story of the scene in the woods that morning when Rube made his escape, ending by saying:

"A captain of the general's staff ordered me to release her, and I did so."

"Yes, I was present, and know you were not to blame. She is undoubtedly a rank rebel through her love for that man whose escape she planned."

"But her people are loyal."

"Yes, no doubt of that. Now, I have a plan to capture that fellow, who is, I hear, a daring rebel scout and spy, and at the same time force her to return to her allegiance to the cause of the king. You must take a dozen men, or more, if necessary, and go down to the house and arrest her. Take her to the old farmhouse a mile below her home, on the right-hand side of the road, and keep her there until I come. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, colonel, I think I do," said the sergeant. "But what explanation shall I give?"

"None save that you are obeying orders."

The sergeant saluted the colonel and went away.

The officer sauntered off in another direction.

"Ah!" hissed Rube between his set teeth, as he walked away from the tree. "You are more anxious to serve your own base ends than to serve the king! You wish to get her in your power, and then force her to purchase her freedom with her honor. By the God that lives, I will save her and punish you, if I perish the moment after!"

The young scout lost no time in getting back to his comrades, who were waiting for him.

"Come," he said. "We will capture some game to-night that will make the rascals wince."

He led them down below the Bosworth farm, and there waited in the bushes for the coming of the sergeant and his men.

Whilst waiting there Rube went over to the house and tried to get a chance to see Mabel alone.

He saw her sitting near her brother before the glowing log fire, whilst her father conversed with them about the wickedness of the rebellion. But there was no chance for him to speak with her, as he did not desire that the rest of the family should see him on the premises.

That he might have the chance to catch the British officer, Rube concluded to let the sergeant take her to the place selected, and then rescue her. Then he would wait for the villain and give him the reception he deserved.

Going back to his men, he explained to them his plans. They agreed to them, and then set out to the place of rendezvous. Scarcely had they left the farmhouse than Sergeant Renfro and seven men appeared and knocked for admittance.

The old farmer himself opened the door, and the sergeant stepped boldly in. Mabel recognized him at the first glance.

"Miss," he said, "I have been sent to take you to headquarters."

"What am I wanted for?" Mabel asked of the sergeant.

"I suppose the general wishes to ask you some questions about the man whose escape you effected this morning," was the evasive reply.

"Well, I know very little about him, save that he is a brave young man who does not bear allegiance to the king," she said.

"I am not authorized to ask you any questions myself," remarked the sergeant. "Will you go quietly, or must I use force?"

"It will be useless for me to resist," she said. "General Arnold could have sent one of his staff here to get the information without subjecting me to this outrage."

"My daughter, I will go with you!" cried her mother.

"No use, madam," said the sergeant. "We don't wish to be bothered by any other prisoners. She will be returned under guard as soon as the general has finished his business with her."

"Can't you allow me to accompany her?" her father asked.

"No, sir."

"We must submit, I suppose. But it is an outrage I don't think a British officer would be guilty of."

The sergeant understood his meaning as a cut at Arnold, but did not correct him by saying that it was a British officer who gave the order for her arrest.

Mabel put on her bonnet and shawl and said:

"I am ready."

Myrtis and her mother threw themselves into each other's arms and burst into tears.

"Remember, father," said Mabel to her father, "you said the king could do no wrong. This is the king's work."

Her sarcasm cut the old Tory to the heart, and he made no reply.

Out in the yard she was placed on a horse, and the party rode away down the river.

Mabel knew that Arnold had gone on toward Richmond, and that his headquarters were somewhere in that direction.

"You are not taking me to General Arnold's quarters," she said, turning to the sergeant.

"I am simply obeying orders, miss," the sergeant replied.

"Yes, I am prepared for any outrage. This is an invasion of demons, and the result will be that all the loyal people will side with the rebels when you leave."

The sergeant made no reply to her comments, and in a little while they reached the old farmhouse where they had been ordered to take her.

"You are to remain here until further orders, or the general comes," said the sergeant, as he dismounted and assisted her to alight.

They led her into the house, when the sergeant ordered one of his men to strike a light.

The moment the light blazed up the sergeant looked around the room, and was almost paralyzed at what he saw.

At the rear end of the room he saw Rattling Rube and ten men covering his party with their rifles.

"Do you surrender, sergeant?" Rube demanded.

"It would be useless to resist," was the reply.

"Yes, I think it would. Just lay down your arms and hold your hands up."

The redcoats obeyed.

Then one of the patriots very quietly gathered up the arms and removed them.

At the first sound of his voice Mabel recognized the young scout and sprang toward him.

"Halt!" cried Rube. "Wait just a minute or two."

When the arms were removed and the prisoners secured, Rube turned to her and said:

"You are free, Miss Bosworth."

She sprang forward and caught his hand in both hers.

"Oh, you have saved me!" she cried, looking into his face with all the intensity of her soul.

"I would have given my life to save you," he said in low, earnest tones.

"Ah, I am happy now! I have no more fears. I am in the hands of honorable men—not brutes."

"Yes, we are men," said Rube, "and we defend and protect women, instead of— Hark! that's the colonel! Stand where you are, redcoats, and if you give the alarm you are dead men."

The sound of horses' feet on the road was heard, and in a little while it ceased. Then a man's footsteps were heard approaching the door. The next moment the British officer entered and was greeted by the black muzzles of ten patriot rifles.

CHAPTER X.

THE MIDNIGHT DUEL.

The dumfounded officer glared at the rifles like one in a trance. He turned ashen-hued in the face, and made a movement toward the door. Rattling Rube pressed the muzzle of his rifle against his breast.

"Halt!" he sternly cried.

"Who—are—you?" the officer asked in a stammering way.

"We are men," answered Rube.

"Rebels?"

"Yes—rebels against such as you and your king, who make war on helpless women. Sergeant, bind this man."

The sergeant stepped forward and produced a strong cord.

"I am a prisoner of war," said the officer, drawing back.

"You have no right to bind me."

"You are not a prisoner of war, colonel," said Rube.

"What am I, then?"

"A scoundrel, caught in the commission of a crime," was the quiet reply.

The colonel flushed red in the face and said:

"I am in your power. You can insult me to your heart's content, and I cannot resent it."

"Would you resent it if you could, colonel?" Rube asked.

"Yes, and punish the insulter as he deserved."

"I do not believe you. You are a coward. You dare not face a man on equal terms. I was under that tree in your camp to-night, and heard you give the sergeant the order to arrest this lady and bring her here."

"You are a spy, then!"

"Yes, but not a scoundrel like you. I hastened to prepare for your reception. You are my prisoner. You ought to be hanged, like the villain you are. If I turn you over to the authorities you will be treated better than you deserve. If you will fight me in single combat and vanquish me, you may go back to your command as you came—a free man."

"What do you wish to fight with?" the prisoner asked.

"You may choose the weapons yourself," was the reply.

"Ah! Fortune is kind. I will make choice of the sword."

"Very well. You need not bind him, sergeant."

"No—no!" exclaimed Mabel, turning pale as death. "You should not peril your life that way, Mr. Rattling."

"There is little peril to me in this encounter," said Rube, replying to her with a smile.

"You—must—not—risk—your life, Mr. Rattling."

"There will be no risk about it, Miss Bosworth. I will punish him as he deserves. Get me that sword, sergeant."

"No—no! You shall not!" and she flew at the sergeant and tried to snatch the sword from his hand.

"Miss Bosworth," said Rube, and he interfered and got the sword in his hand, "you must not interfere in this thing. I am going to punish yonder villain or die in the attempt. If I have any favor in your eyes, stand aside and not cause me to be branded as a coward. I have challenged him and must fight him."

She gazed at him with an intensity of expression in her eyes that told volumes. Her soul was in her eyes.

"But if you should fall?" she tremblingly asked. "What then?"

"Think of me as one who died in your defense."

She drew back to the further end of the room and said nothing more.

Her lips were compressed as if she was making a mighty effort to control herself.

The two men—now hating each other as only two such men could hate—took positions and crossed swords.

"Look out for yourself, villain!" cried Rube, as he crossed swords with him.

The Briton scorned to make reply. He made several passes at the young patriot. They were parried with a skill that amazed him. The contemptuous smile left his face, and a grim scowl took its place.

Round and round they went, their eyes glaring, and their hard breathing was heard by everyone in the room.

Mabel Bosworth held her hands clasped tightly over her heart, as if to still its wild throbbing, and gazed with bated breath on the deadly combat.

Suddenly the Briton forced the fighting, and Rube was driven across the room almost against the wall.

"Oh, Heaven, save my preserver!" cried Mabel, in a trembling voice.

Quick as a flash Rube made a terrible lunge, and his sword point came out under the left shoulder blade of the Briton. The officer dropped his sword and staggered backward, falling to the floor so heavily as to break the point of the weapon that had pierced him.

With a glad cry Mabel sprang forward and threw her arms around Rube's neck.

"Saved—saved!" she cried, and the next moment, as if ashamed of her impetuous action, she turned away and buried her face in her hands.

The next moment the young scout turned to his men and said:

"We must march the prisoners to the north side of the river. Leave the dead where he is. Come, Miss Mabel, let me conduct you back to your parents. I know they are uneasy about you," and he led her out of the house into the starlight.

One of the men having brought the horse on which she had ridden, Rube placed her in the saddle and then mounted his own. After whispering a few words with the sergeant who had charge of the prisoners, he turned and rode away, with the daughter of the proud old Tory, David Bosworth, by his side.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LOVERS.

The two rode some distance in the darkness of the night without uttering a word. Mabel was thinking of the grand young hero who had periled his life for her in the terrible

combat she had just witnessed, wondering what she should do to reward him.

Events had transpired so rapidly in the past two or three days that she was partially bewildered and at a loss to know the feelings of her own heart.

During the two days just passed she had not been able to get the young patriot scout out of her thoughts. She was thinking of him and his gallant conduct all the time. And now he had again given her fresh food for thought. He had saved her from a fate worse than death itself.

"We must ride faster," said Rube, in low, but respectful tones, "or we may be interfered with by more of the villains," and he laid his hand on the bridle rein to lead her horse the better in the dark.

"And that would jeopardize you again," she said.

"That matters not," he returned. "I think only of your safety. A soldier is in jeopardy always when near the enemy."

"Generous hero! God bless you, Rube Rattling!" she impulsively exclaimed.

"And God bless you, Mabel Bosworth!" he returned. "I could die a thousand times for you, and count each death a joy!"

"Oh, heavens, what a heart! Do you love me, Rube?"

"Better than my own soul!" he answered in low, earnest tones.

"Thank Heaven, my love is returned!"

"What! you love me?"

"Yes, my hero, with all my heart!"

He spurred his horse to her side. His arm reached round her waist, and, by a strength made stronger by love, he lifted her out of the saddle and transferred her to his own horse, holding her firmly in front of him.

How he pressed her to his heart.

How he covered her face with burning kisses, with only the twinkling stars as witnesses.

What floods of joy swept over their souls.

"I am in rebellion against my king," said Rube, "but my heart is true to my queen," and he sealed his pledge with another kiss.

"And to you, my hero-king, my heart will be always true," she returned, with a fervid caress.

"I will not doubt you, my queen. You are brave and dauntless, and I know you will be true. I will now have a lighter heart than ever, for a gladness fills my soul that never filled it before."

"You have never loved another, then?" she asked.

"No; you are my first and only love, my Mabel."

"Nor have I ever seen one I could love till I loved you, my hero. Your brave conduct and nobleness of heart won my love in spite of all my prejudices against your cause."

"Ah! you love my cause, too?"

"Yes; I hate the king and his cause. Hark! I hear horses' footsteps."

"Yes, someone comes this way," said Rube. "We will dodge into the woods and wait till they pass."

Quickly turning his horse's head to the left, our hero urged him forward, and in another moment they were safely in the woods. In a few moments the troopers—for such they were—had arrived nearly opposite the spot where our hero and heroine had found shelter. They were a company of troopers sent down the road on some purpose, and it was plain that the men were not at all pleased with this night service, for they complained of the cold and darkness.

"By my soul, Mabel!" exclaimed Rube in a whisper to the maiden he held so close to his heart, "there are not above a score of them in that party!"

"Well, what of that? Would you rashly attack a score?"

"No—not alone—save in your defense, but I have half a

score of brave men just on the other side of the river. Come! I will kiss you good-night at your door and then to my work."

With that he put spurs to his horse and dashed out of the woods into the road. The gallant steed flew like the wind, notwithstanding his double burden, and in ten minutes the Bosworth farmhouse came into view through the gloom of the night. At the door he folded her once more to his heart, imprinting a loving kiss on her lips, and then sprang into the saddle again. Just as the scout dashed away the door opened and Mabel was caught in her father's arms.

"My daughter—my daughter!" cried old David Bosworth. "Thank Heaven, you have returned alive!"

The mother and sister, neither of whom had retired, rushed to her side with glad shouts of joy.

She told her story in a very few words, to the utter amazement of her father.

"The king will never countenance such outrages!" he exclaimed in his wrath. "I will lay the case before Sir Henry Clinton and demand protection."

"The king takes no care to punish his men for crimes committed in an enemy's country," said Mabel. "It is the character of his followers. Why not renounce your allegiance to the——"

"God forbid!" gasped the old Tory. "I cannot commit treason!"

"It is no treason, father, to defend yourself and property against robbers such as they. Rube Rattling, the rebel, again rescued me and slew the officer with his own hand. What do we not owe to that daring young patriot!"

"Oh, sister!" exclaimed the gentle Myrtis, "he is a real hero, isn't he?"

"Yes—every inch a hero," said Mabel, as her eyes flashed. "You should have seen him cross swords with the officer and fight him to the death."

"Did you see the fight?"

"Yes, and kissed him when he triumphed."

"Daughter! Did you so far forget yourself?"

"Yes, father; I kissed the man who saved my life and honor, and when he returned the caress I gave him two more as quickly as I could," and the brave girl looked her father full in the face as she spoke.

The old man was shocked and her mother amazed.

They stared at her in silence for several minutes.

Myrtis, her gentle, loving sister, came and placed her arm around her waist.

"You love him, do you not, sister?" Myrtis asked.

"Yes, and he loves me. I am going to be his whenever he comes to claim me," and Mabel turned and kissed her gentle sister as she made the happy confession.

"Oh, my daughter!" groaned the old man, dropping into a chair and burying his face in his hands. "And he a rebel—a good-for-nothing!"

"Good-for-nothing!" cried Mabel, her eyes blazing with indignation. "You are indebted to him for the roof over your head, and I owe him my life! No braver hero ever lived than he, and I am more proud of him than of my own brother, who wears the infamous uniform of the tyrant!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCOUT AT WORK.

On leaving Mabel Bosworth at the door of her home, Rube remounted his horse and dashed away at full speed.

Down the road he flew in the direction he had just come. He looked neither to the right nor left. The stars overhead

twinkled, and the tall, leafless trees on either side of the road added to the gloom of the night. But he cared not for darkness or starlight. He knew his way, and hastened with all speed to reach his destination.

At last he struck a small road that turned toward the river, and plunged along under the gloomy shadows of the trees at a breakneck speed till he came to a log cabin.

There was a dim light in the cabin. Throwing himself out of the saddle, Rube struck a smart blow on the door of the cabin with the butt of his pistol. A man came forward, and, without opening the door, asked:

"Who is it?"

"It's me—Rube Rattling," was the reply of the scout. "Open the door, Robinson."

"De Lor' gorramity!" exclaimed a negro's voice within; "dat's Marse Rube, suah!"

"Is that you, Pete?" asked Rube, while the old man was trying to undo the fastening of the door.

"Yes, sah—dis heah's me, sah!" replied the negro, just as the door opened.

"What is it, Rube?" old Robinson asked, as the scout stood before him.

"I want to leave my horse here and go over the river without a minute's loss of time," was the reply.

"Then you can go back with Pete. He has just come in, and wants to go over," said Robinson. "There's a small boat below the ferry-boat tied to a tree. Here's the key," and he gave Pete the key to the lock that held the boat chained to the shore.

Pete ran out and soon had the boat ready. He gave a low whistle as a signal for Rube to join him.

The scout soon put in his appearance, and said:

"Now, Pete, put me across as fast as you can."

"Yes, sah," replied the black, plying the oar with tremendous energy.

"Where are you going on the other side, Pete?" Rube asked, when they were about half way over.

"I'se gwine fo' ter git outen de way ob dem sogers, sah."

"What have you done with your young mistress' horse?"

"Hid 'im in de swamp, sah."

"But you are leaving him there all alone."

"Yes, sah; but I'se ergwine back dar in de mornin'."

"Wouldn't you rather go with me, Pete?"

"Yes, sah!"

"Well, I'm going over here after some friends, and then we are going back again. You shall have a gun and give us a little help to-night."

Pete chuckled with great glee. He had never shot a gun in all his life, and the thought that he would be allowed to do so pleased him wonderfully, and he pulled at the oar with all his might. They struck the north bank of the river, and then Rube turned to Pete and said:

"Do you know all the farmers over on this side?"

"Yes, sah—all ob dem," was the reply of the black.

"Can you carry a note to a few of them for me?"

"Yes, sah!"

Rube took a pencil and wrote on a piece of paper torn from a small memorandum:

"Any friend of Liberty who sees this will help the cause by coming to Robinson's ferry at once—Rube Rattling."

"There," he said, giving the bit of paper to Pete. "Go to all the houses of those you know to be friends to Washington's cause and show that to the men. As the time is short, you can only take the ones nearest to this spot. You must return here in one hour. I will go in another direction, and get back here about the same time. Now be off with you, and show yourself worthy to be a soldier."

Pete took the paper and bounded up the hill with the speed

of a deer. Rube gazed after him till he disappeared in the gloom of the night, and then started off in another direction.

He had gone but a half mile when he came to a farmhouse, before which paced a sentinel.

"Rattling Rube!" exclaimed the astonished guard. "What brings you over the river to-night?"

"Urgent business," was the reply. "Are our friends within?"

"Yes, and the prisoners, too."

"Well, the hope that we can strike another blow and add to the list of prisoners brings me over. Call the sergeant—quick!"

The sergeant came quickly at the call of the guard, and was surprised to meet the scout, with whom he had parted on the south side of the river but two or three hours before. To him Rube explained the cause of his presence there at that hour.

"Bind your prisoners so that two men can guard them," he said to the sergeant, "and hurry down to the ferry as quick as you can with the others. I will have a score of others there inside an hour, and then we will be strong enough to capture or kill the whole company of dragoons."

At the appointed time twenty-five men, all armed to the teeth, appeared at the ferry.

The negro Pete had done his work well, and our hero thanked him in terms that made him feel as happy as a bird.

"Now row over and get the flatboat, Pete," ordered Rube, and the faithful black, accompanied by two white men, entered the small boat and rowed across the river. There they took possession of the big flatboat, which was used for the purpose of carrying teams over the stream, and poled it across to the north side.

The patriots crowded on it, and in a few minutes were landed safely on the south side, where Rube gave quick orders, which were as quickly obeyed.

They marched over to the main road, and there took up a position in the woods whence they could sweep the highway.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEEDS OF A NIGHT.

When he left his command to ride down to the old farmhouse, the British officer gave a captain of dragoons orders to report to him there, with his company, in two hours.

The colonel then set out, and met with the fate that overtook him at the hands of Rattling Rube.

Two hours later the captain of dragoons rode up to the old farmhouse at the head of his men, and dismounted.

The captain and the sergeant opened the door and entered.

There was a faint light in the old house from the smoldering embers on the hearth, by the aid of which the dead body of the British colonel was discovered lying where it had fallen.

"Good Heaven!" gasped the captain, as he saw the form of his colonel lying in a pool of blood. "He has been murdered!"

A careful examination revealed the fact that a number of men had been in the house. The discovery served to give a feeling of uneasiness to the entire command.

"Sergeant," said the captain, "make a litter at once. We must carry the body back to the camp. We must not stay here any longer than is necessary."

As soon as the litter was ready, the dead body was placed thereon, and the order to return was given. The captain of the dragoons then formed the troopers as a guard to the remains, placing a portion in the advance, and the balance as a rear guard. When the advanced guard came up to where the branch road turned off toward the river at Robinson's Ferry, the captain heard a voice in the bushes cry out:

"Ready, men! fire!" and the next moment a sheet of flame lined the roadside, and the advanced guard fell prone to the earth as one man.

The captain was appalled at the terrible destruction of the volley, and for a moment or two was too much stunned to have the presence of mind to give an intelligible order. But if such was the effect on the captain, the men were still more demoralized.

The redcoats had no means of knowing whether the bushes concealed a score or five times that number of foes; hence, every moment of suspense but added to the demoralization the first volley had started.

"Kill the wretches!" cried Rube; and then, just as the patriots were about to send another volley into the ranks, the redcoats broke and fled like so many terror-stricken sheep. The patriots at once proceeded to gather up the arms of the fallen redcoats, and, with a few of the horses found unhurt, made all haste to get on the north side of the river.

The ferry flatboat carried them all over at one trip, and every man went to his home, except those who were in charge of the prisoners that had been captured previous to this last encounter.

"Take the prisoners to Colonel Longworth in Richmond," said Rube to the sergeant, "and give him the information I gave you."

"You are not going over?" the sergeant asked.

"Oh, no. Pete and me will stay here and see what the enemy will do."

The patriot scout then parted with his friends on the river bank and made his way back toward the main road.

The negro, Pete, was the happiest tempered individual our hero had ever seen, and, because he belonged to Mabel Bosworth, he resolved to keep him with him until the enemy left that part of the country, when he would send him back to her.

"Now, Pete," said he to the darky, "do you know where we can get a bit of sleep without freezing to death?"

"Yes, sah, I does."

"Where?"

"In old marsa's barn, sah."

"Why, there's nothing there to sleep on but the bare floor." Pete chuckled.

"Dem sogers didn't git all de hay, marsa," he said.

"Can we get up there without being seen?"

"Yes, sah."

"Come on, then," and he led the way, followed by the faithful negro, who was elated beyond measure at the idea of being a soldier. When they reached the barn Pete led the way into it by means of a secret passage, made by sliding a plank out of place. Once inside, the plank was pushed back in its place, and the two climbed up into the loft, where a goodly quantity of hay was found. Into this our hero crept, and soon fell asleep, to dream of both love and war.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNWELCOME BEDFELLOWS.

How long he slept he knew not, but he was awakened by hearing a number of men climbing up into the loft, and feeling a few others in the hay alongside of him.

Utterly amazed he listened, and heard enough of their conversation to learn that they were a party of Arnold's soldiers who had thus sought the shelter of the barn.

It was so very dark, however, that nothing could be seen. He would have given anything to know where Pete had stowed himself in the hay. But as he did not, he decided to remain

quiet and wait for a favorable opportunity to effect his escape from such unwelcome companionship.

An hour later every trooper was snoring away until the loft of the barn seemed to be a den of discordant spirits. Rube slowly arose from the bed of hay and cautiously made his way down the rude ladder onto the lower floor.

"Dat's you, Marsa Rube?" he heard a voice close by his side ask.

"Yes," answered Rube, recognizing Pete's voice.

The faithful darky, fearing the redcoats would kill him if they caught him, had crept down from the loft as soon as they came up, and had waited for the scout. He knew that Rube would come down as soon as he could safely do so.

"Come, let's get the horses and leave," said Rube, as he caught the negro by the arm.

Without uttering a word Pete led the way out, and in another minute they had scaled the fence and were making for the woods in the rear of the lot. They entered the woods, and cut across toward another barn belonging to another farmer. There they entered the loft and laid down to finish the nap which had been interrupted.

When Rube awoke the sun was high up in the heavens. But he was greatly refreshed, and felt both able and willing to again give the enemy another blow. When he came out of the barn he was seen by the owner, a sturdy farmer, who was a patriot to the core. He welcomed Rube warmly, and invited them into the house for breakfast.

Rube and Pete were each given all they could eat, and when they were through they prepared to leave.

Suddenly Rube turned to the patriot farmer and said:

"Can you aid me any way in getting up a disguise so no one will know me as Rube Rattling?"

The patriot looked hard at him a few minutes, and then said:

"I don't know. I have a lot of old clothes, and——"

"That will do. I have a beard and wig that will help me along some."

"Come in here, then. You shall see for yourself," and he led the way into a bedroom, where he showed him all his old clothes.

The farmer was nearly the same size as our hero, and so there was little trouble about the fit of the clothes.

While he was getting himself up in a disguise Rube discovered an old fiddle in the room.

"Ah!" he ejaculated, as his gaze rested on the musical instrument, "can you be induced to part with that violin for a few days?"

"Yes," was the reply. "We have no use for it, as our son, who used to play on it, is in the army."

"I will return it," said Rube. "It will be of use to me and the cause."

"Then take it."

Rube took the violin and tuned it up to a tolerably decent tone.

"I am going to be a strolling fiddler," he said, and to show the patriot farmer what he could do with the instrument he commenced drawing the bow.

The farmer and his entire family made him play for more than an hour, and never heard such fiddling before in their lives.

Pete came from the kitchen, where he had been staying with the other servants, and hung around the door, completely carried away with the soul-inspiring music.

He listened in rapt silence for some time, and then, as if utterly unable to keep still, began to dance. The other negroes joined in with him, and in a few minutes every man, woman and child of them was dancing with might and main.

After an hour's exercise with the violin, our hero stopped and laid the violin aside. He sent for Pete, and that darky was

shown into the room, where the scout let him into the secret of the disguise.

"We are going out as strolling fiddlers," he said. "I will play and you will dance. My name will be Jack Smith—Marse Jack—while we are out with the fiddle. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Marse Jack."

"Come on, then," and they left the house together.

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

Both Rube and Pete left their guns behind them when they left the farmhouse. But they were not unarmed. Both carried pistols well concealed about their persons, and were ready at any moment to draw and defend themselves.

Out on the main road the scout turned toward Richmond, knowing that in that direction lay the army of the great arch-traitor. On every side he could see the smoke of burning houses, which the Tories and British were consigning to the flames.

By and by they met a detachment of redcoats which was guarding the road. The death of the colonel and a dozen men the night before had made them a little more cautious.

"Who are you?" one of the guards asked.

"My name is Jack Smith," he replied. "I came here to play the violin for the king's men."

The men believed him, and in a little while he was welcomed to the campfire, where he tuned up his violin and played "God Save the King," and other national airs of England. The soldiers were more than pleased. They were delighted, and insisted on his sharing their rations with them, and playing for them that evening.

"Petè, you nigger!" he called to the imp of darkness who had come with him, "show the good king's soldiers how you can throw your heels."

Pete needed no second invitation. With a broad grin that displayed a vast array of ivory he began to dance.

His grotesque enthusiasm was too much for the risibles of the redcoats, and roars of laughter followed every movement of his heels. Pete never danced with such vigor before in all his life, and at the end of an hour he was completely fagged out and stopped. Then some of the redcoats took a hand at it, and the fun was kept up till a late hour.

Just before our hero was about to leave the headquarters a courier dashed up and threw himself from his horse. He had evidently ridden hard and fast from some point.

His presence created some little excitement among the group of officers about headquarters, and many were anxious to know what news he had brought.

While he was closeted with Arnold the group of officers discussed the situation among themselves. Now and then a word would reach our hero's ears that was as good as a whole story to him.

"Ah!" ejaculated one who had got the news. "What do you think it is?"

"Why keep us in suspense?" another asked. "What is it?"

"The young Frenchman, Lafayette, has been sent to capture us."

"He is young, but a brave, skillful officer," remarked an officer with a gray mustache, as he saw several of his younger companions laughing, "and if he has a good force to back him we will by no means have a very easy time in our work here."

Another courier came up and dismounted, and all conversation was hushed till he passed into the presence of the general.

A few moments later a tall young man, in the uniform of a British captain, rode up and dismounted.

Our hero looked at him in a way that evinced his desire to locate him and his business at that particular moment. The young officer returned his gaze in a manner that made Rube feel ill at ease. But the patriot scout was not the one to show by his face what was passing in his brain.

After a few moments the young captain spoke to a staff officer, and expressed a desire to be conducted to the presence of General Arnold. He was led into the house, and as he disappeared Pete began a series of signs and grimaces to attract Rube's attention. Rube saw that something was wrong, and rose to his feet to go away. Danger menaced him, but from which direction he did not know.

"Give us one more tune?" an officer asked.

"I have played all I know," was the reply.

Pete shook his head, and then slipped away in the darkness.

"Play one over again, then," suggested another.

Snap! went one of the strings of the violin.

Rube had purposely broken it with his left hand.

"There! You see I can play no more to-night," he said, and then he started to follow in the direction Pete had gone.

"Arrest that fiddler!" cried a stern voice, as the young captain who had just arrived emerged from Arnold's quarters.

"He is a rebel spy!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TORY CAPTAIN'S RETURN HOME.

The next day after her gallant rescue, Mabel Bosworth was sitting by the window.

"Oh, it's horrible—this war!" she murmured to herself, as she sat there and gazed vacantly at the frost-work on the window-glass. "Men meet in deadly conflict, and rend each other like wild beasts. Brave men fall on either side, and he may fall—the best and bravest of them all. Oh, Heavens, if he should fall!" and she gave a shudder, followed by a gasp, that caused Myrtis to look up from her work and ask:

"What ails you, sister? You are not like yourself this morning."

Mabel turned and looked at her beautiful sister in some surprise. The interruption had recalled her to herself, and she replied:

"I suppose I am troubled about the occurrences of last night."

"Yes," said Myrtis, sympathetically taking up her work and moving over to Mabel's side. "I don't see how you could have stood there and gazed at the horrible scene. I should have fallen in a dead faint."

"I am sure you would," remarked Mabel. "But I am made of stronger stuff than you, it seems. But it was terrible! Not for worlds would I go through it again!"

The sound of a horse's feet on the frozen ground without caused them to instantly pause and gaze at each other.

The horse stopped in front of the gate, and a silence of a minute followed. Then came a loud, authoritative knock on the door.

The fear that a new danger menaced her sister caused Myrtis to throw herself in Mabel's arms.

Suddenly the door was opened, and a tall, handsome-looking young man, in the uniform of a British captain, stepped into the room.

Mabel was the first to see him, and a glad cry of:

"Brother! Brother!" burst from her lips.

Sister Mabel! Sister Myrtis!" cried the handsome young

captain, as the two sisters sprang forward and clasped their loving arms around his neck.

How they loved their brave, handsome brother! How proud he was of his beautiful sisters!

The parents, hearing the noise of the reception, ran in from the dining-room and added a glad welcome. They had not seen their son since more than a year ago. To see him now safe and well, after having passed through the storm of Southern battles, filled their hearts with great joy.

"This is a most unexpected pleasure, my son," said the father, after the reception had quieted down. "What has brought you to our home at this time, when we thought you so far away?"

"Do you think I would stay away from home when I could come back with safety, father?" he asked, glancing from one to the other of his beloved parents. "The moment I heard that the king's troops were here I applied to his lordship for leave to pay you a visit. I have ridden day and night—and here I am."

"God bless you, my son!" exclaimed the happy mother. "You have grown such a big, strong man, and you have not been hurt?"

"No, mother, and I have been in some terrible battles down in the Carolinas. The rebels are as defiant as ever. They come out of the swamps, strike a blow, and then vanish again."

"Will the king's armies finally triumph, my son?" the old man asked.

"How can you doubt it, father? But what makes you so pale, Mabel?" and the young officer glanced uneasily at his beautiful sister.

"Am I pale?" Mabel asked with a start. "I am not ill, I am sure."

"Oh, she had such an adventure last night, brother," exclaimed Myrtis. "She was arrested by the king's soldiers, and——"

"Arrested! And by the king's soldiers!" cried the captain, in almost dumfounded amazement.

"Yes; and she was rescued by a rebel, who killed the officer who caused the arrest."

"In Heaven's name what was it all about?"

"I think it was all a mistake," said the father, quickly, fearing that Mabel would shock her brother by her patriotic denunciation of the king's cause.

"But how did it happen? Tell me all?" the captain asked.

"It was in this wise," said the old man. "When General Arnold reached here with his troops, he did not know that we were loyal to the king, and so much mischief was done ere I could make him understand that we were not rebels. Mabel was so indignant that she spoke sharply before the general, and denounced the king and his cause. It all grew out of that."

"Ah, sister, you should not have spoken so hastily," said her brother. "There are so few loyal men in this section that they were not to blame for the mistake. The good king will make a handsome reparation for our losses."

During the day the young officer visited the negro cabins to shake hands with the slaves. The simple-minded negroes crowded around him with demonstrations of welcome.

"Where is Pete?" he asked of one of the black men.

"Dat nigger done gone an' runned away wid Rattlin' Rube, sah!" was the reply. "An' he tuk Miss Mabel's hoss wid 'im."

"Oh, those rebels will do anything. They ought to be hung!"

When he returned to the house, he asked his father about Pete, and learned that he had indeed gone off with Rattling Rube. But so anxious was the old man to keep Mabel's love for the brave scout a secret from the son that he made no explanations, and the subject was dropped.

Thus it was that, when the young captain reported to Arnold

that evening, he recognized Pete dancing to Rube's fiddling. He glared at Rube, and saw that he was disguised. Pete got away after trying to warn Rube of his danger. As the scout started to follow, he was denounced as a spy.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CAPTURE AND ESCAPE.

Rube well knew that capture meant sure death to him. Drawing his pistols, he fired two shots into the surging mass of redcoats. He hoped that in the confusion that would follow he would be able to escape in the darkness.

When he fired he wheeled and dashed away in the darkness. Ere he ran ten paces he came in violent contact with three men—all stalwart soldiers. One of the men clasped his arms around him. Rube made a desperate effort and released himself. The man sought to grasp him again. Rube brought the heavy horse-pistol down on his head with a crushing effect, and he sank to the earth with a groan.

Then the others made a rush to detain him. In a moment he was caught by a half dozen all at once.

With a hoarse growl he clutched the throat of one of those who held him. The victim's breath was shut off instantaneously. They all went down together, and when the spy was secured his beard and wig were gone. But his grip on the throat of the redcoat was not relaxed. The soldier was dead.

The man with the crushed skull was dying, and one of the two who had been shot was gasping in the throes of death.

The scout and spy had done fearful work.

But he was now held firmly by a dozen hands—a helpless prisoner. The most intense excitement prevailed in the camp as the captive was led back to the spot where, but a few minutes previous, he had been amusing the soldiers.

He was led into the house. Two stalwart redcoats held him on either side.

Benedict Arnold was standing before a glowing wood fire, warming himself. Rube was halted in the middle of the room, where they stood face to face. The arch-traitor scowled at him. Rube looked him straight in the eyes, and never flinched. Both were men of indomitable courage.

"You are a spy!" said the traitor, in low, hissing tones.

"And you," came from Rube's lips, "what are you?"

Benedict Arnold turned pale and red by turns.

The question went home to him, and he knew that the very members of his military staff felt the full force of it. But he did not delay his reply.

"I am General Arnold, of his majesty's service," he said, "and it is my duty to appoint a court-martial to try your case at once," and then he turned to the officers around him and named five of them to sit as judges in the case.

"Proceed at once, gentlemen," he ordered. "We may march at sunrise."

"Traitor!" hissed Rube, through his clenched teeth. "Die the death of a dog!" and making a tiger-like spring, he clutched him by the throat with his right hand.

The traitor staggered back almost into the fire, gasping for breath. The next instant the desperate patriot was torn away by main force, and the life of his victim was saved.

Captain Bosworth was the first to seize him.

When Arnold was released he hoarsely exclaimed:

"Take him out and hang him! Never mind about the court-martial! Hang him at once!"

With a strength born of supreme desperation our hero wrenched himself free. He dealt the young officer a blow on his ear that laid him in a heap on the floor. Then, with a

mighty bound, he sprang through a window, sending a shower of shattered glass in every direction.

There was no light on that side of the house. Hence the pistol shots that were fired at him from the window were aimed blindly.

In the darkness he dodged into a clump of bushes. Then he sped forward into the woods and toward the river.

A great hullabaloo was raised, and hundreds of soldiers searched the woods. He could not be found in such darkness.

The moment he reached the river he plunged in. The water was icy cold, and full of floating cakes of ice, but with good fortune he finally managed to reach the opposite shore.

Rube hardly had strength enough to crawl up out of the water. He was nearly frozen. But the cold night winds of January were even colder than the rushing waters of the river.

His dripping garments were quickly frozen, and his teeth chattered as if an ague convulsed him.

By the most violent exertions for ten minutes or more, he succeeded in getting up a circulation of blood again. Then he moved off direct from the river, till he struck a rail fence which inclosed a field. Beyond that field he knew the road lay. Once in the road, he could exercise himself and make rapid progress toward a shelter that would be gladly given him by a well-known patriot.

He lost no time in crossing the field and gaining the road.

He had barely reached it when he met three patriots who were watching for a band of Tories who were going to try and join Arnold. They recognized and welcomed him cordially.

"Come along," said one of the patriots. "I'll soon have you warm enough."

After leaving the roadside they went over a little hill, and down into a sort of gorge, where stood a double log cabin, surrounded by a dense forest growth.

"Here we are!" said the man, pushing open the door and stepping inside.

A glance within showed our hero more than a score of well-armed men, and a huge roaring fire on the wide hearth.

They hailed him with delight and grasped his hand as he stepped over the threshold.

"Come to the fire, man! Why, how came you in the river? Tell us about it!"

He soon told his story, and the terrible recital made their blood tingle. In a little while his clothing was dry, and, barring the bruises he had received from violent contact with floating ice, he felt as well as ever.

About two hours after Rube's arrival at the cabin in the forest, one of the guard came running in, saying:

"Quick! They are coming."

Rube was quickly supplied with a brace of pistols, and they left the hut and crept through the dark forest toward the road.

"There they come!" whispered the patriot leader. "Be ready, but don't fire till I give the order. If we can take them without a shot we must do so."

The small band of Tories, some twenty-five or more in number, came along the road some time after midnight. They were making for the ferry, some three or four miles below, where they expected to cross, and thus join the enemy before their patriot neighbors knew anything about it. When they reached the spot in the road directly opposite the patriots in the bushes, they were startled by a peremptory command to halt. They halted instant, greatly terrified, for none of them had ever seen service.

"Throw down your arms or you are dead men!" cried the patriot leader.

"We surrender!" cried the terrified wretches, throwing down their arms. "Don't shoot!"

"We won't fire unless you resist," said the patriot leader.

"Fall back ten paces from your guns. There! Halt! Stand where you are now."

The patriots ran out into the road, and took possession of the arms that had been thrown down. Then they secured the prisoners, and marched them down to the cabin in the woods.

The prisoners were the worst frightened men their captors had ever seen. They expected they would all be hanged or shot for their attempt to join the king's standard, on account of the terribly bitter feeling caused by the presence of Arnold on Virginia soil.

Rube drew out of their leader the fact that a party of dragoons were to meet them at the ferry, and escort them to the British camp. The news electrified him. He called the patriot leader aside, and hurriedly told him what he had just learned.

"Now, we ought to go down there," he said, "and meet those dragoons. When they least expect it we can kill or capture the whole company. What say you?"

The leader shook his head. He lacked Rube's enterprise and daring.

"Give me twenty men, then, and I will do it."

"That will leave me nine men."

"Enough to guard your prisoners."

"Take 'em if they will go."

In half an hour twenty brave, determined patriots were on their way to the ferry, with Rattling Rube at their head.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RUBE PLAYS A GAME AND WINS.

On his way down to the ferry Rube explained to his comrades what his plans were.

"The redcoats will think we are the Tory friends they were sent down to meet. We will pretend to be Tories, and march along with them till we reach the main road. Then when you hear me say 'We are not traitors,' every one of you must turn and shoot down a redcoat. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," they all responded.

"I will be talking as we walk along, and will bring in those words just when I think we have reached the best place for the attack. If every man does his duty we will kill twenty and capture the balance. But if there are too many for us, I will call out 'To the woods!' after the first fire. Then we can all meet in the woods below Mackin's barn. Do all of you understand me?"

"Yes," they replied.

"Very well. Let every man look after the redcoat nearest to him. We are almost there now. Keep quiet, and keep your eyes and ears open."

They had now but a short distance to go. Up one hill and down the other side, and they would be at the river.

"There's a light on the other side," remarked one of the men, as they reached the top of the hill.

"Yes, and the redcoats are there waiting for us," said Rube, as he recognized the red uniforms of Britain by the fire-light, even at that distance.

When they reached the river bank they stopped and quietly surveyed the scene on the other side. They wanted to see how many they would have to encounter when the tug of war came.

"There are about forty of them," said Rube, in a whisper. "We can dispose of half of them at the first fire, and settle the other half with our pistols before they can get over the shock. What say you? Will you follow me?"

"Yes—lead on," was the dauntless reply.

Rube then called out:

"Halloo, there!"

As his voice was heard on the other side, a commotion among the redcoats by the fire was noticed.

"Hallo!" came back across the river. "Who are you?"

"We are king's men. Send the ferryboat over," answered Rube.

"How many are you?"

"Twenty-one."

"We will send the boat over."

In a little while old Robinson began to pull his old flatboat across the stream.

Rube knew the old ferryman was a staunch patriot. But he had to keep quiet and not take sides with either party in an open manner. Yet he never neglected an opportunity to aid the cause of Washington when he could secretly do so.

Robinson never dreamed but what he was going over after a party of Tories. So, when the flatboat touched the other shore, he was knocked almost out of breath, when Rattling Rube came on board and asked:

"How many are over there, old man?"

"Rube Rattling!" gasped the old ferryman, staring at the scout as if he were a ghost.

"Yes; this is me, old man," said Rube, very quietly.

"And you are not dead?"

"No; I don't think I am. Why do you ask?"

"Because the redcoats over there all say you were drowned in the river to-night."

"Well, we'll give them something else to say before morning," remarked Rube.

The old flatboat moved slowly across the stream with its score of brave sons of Liberty, and in a little while reached the other side.

When it struck the shore three or four British officers met the patriots, and congratulated them on having gotten safely away from their rebel neighbors.

"We had better make haste back to camp," said one of the officers. "Come, we must be off. Take charge of these men, Captain Bosworth, and I will look after my own command." And the officer turned to a tall young officer by his side as he spoke.

"Thanks, major," said the captain. "We will follow on your heels."

On hearing the name of Captain Bosworth, our hero was knocked all in a heap. He was the brother of Mabel Bosworth—the woman he loved better than his own soul.

"Fall in, men!" ordered the young captain. "You know how to march like soldiers, do you not?"

"Yes," answered Rube, as he placed himself at the head of his men. As he did so he whispered to the one behind him:

"Tell 'em to leave Captain Bosworth to me."

The men passed the word, and in less than two minutes they all had it. Then they moved up the hill, and the redcoats joined them in the march toward the main road.

As they moved along, Rube began a conversation with Captain Bosworth, on the state of the country, and the recent successes of the king's arms.

"I think General Arnold will break the spirit of rebellion here," said the young captain. "The rebels have said so many hard things about him that he has no mercy in his soul for them. Why, a daring spy was found in the camp to-night and taken before him. The general appointed a court-martial to try him. As the guards were about to remove him he sprang at the general, clutched him by the throat, and would have strangled him then and there had he not been torn away by force. Then he sprang through a window, and ran down into the river. He must have been drowned, for no man could have swam across in that icy water and floating ice."

"It would be remarkable if he did," quietly remarked Rube.

"Yes, indeed. I am quite sure he never reached the other bank. This country is full of daring, desperate traitors."

"Yes, that's so, captain, but we are not traitors!"

Crack! crack! cr-r-r-ack!

Twenty rifles rang out their death-knells, and twenty Britons went down on the hard-frozen ground. The others were so dumfounded that they made no movement toward defense, and in another moment each had the muzzle of a pistol clapped to his head, and the command:

"Surrender!" hissed in his ears,

"Great God!" gasped Captain Bosworth, as Rube planted the muzzle of his pistol against his breast. "Who are you?"

"I am Rube Rattling," was the reply, "who was not drowned after choking that arch-traitor. Do you surrender?"

"Yes."

"Sensible. The fools are not all dead. Secure their arms, men."

The redcoats were disarmed in a trice, and Rube ordered his men to march back toward the river.

"You are leaving wounded men behind to perish with cold, sir," said Captain Bosworth to our hero.

"That's true, captain," replied Rube; "but I think the safety of ourselves should be consulted first, and our enemies next."

"But you might detail two or three men to look after them. The king's officers will treat them properly."

"Our experience has taught us that British officers never treat their enemies like human beings. I shall not ask one of these men to run the risk of falling into the hands of their cruel enemy."

"I think you are unjust in your opinion of us, Mr. Rattling," remarked Captain Bosworth.

"I may be, captain, but my experience is at the bottom of it. However, if you will give me your word of honor that you will not fight against us until regularly exchanged, you may go back and look after the wounded."

"I will do it. There's my hand, sir," and the young officer grasped Rube's hand and shook it warmly.

"Very well, captain. You may go back now. I would not harm a hair of your head for all the world," and then Rube turned away and hurried along toward the ferry.

"Good Heaven!" groaned Captain Bosworth, on finding himself alone, "this must be some horrible dream? That fellow alive, and at the head of such a daring band in less than three hours after plunging into the river! Oh, it must be a dream! It cannot surely be real!"

He pressed his hand to his forehead, and glared around and up at the silent stars.

The groans of five wounded men caused him to turn to them.

"My poor fellows," he said, in anguished tones, "this is a terrible blow. It was a cowardly attack. They never gave us a chance to defend ourselves."

"No, captain," said one of the wounded. "I wouldn't mind it if I could have given a shot in return. But I fear I am done for."

"I hope not," said the young officer. "My father lives but a mile or two from here. I will run up to the house and get help. Just be patient till I return," and with that the captain turned and ran off up the road as fast as his heels could carry him. In due time he reached the old homestead where he was born, and made such a noise at the door that he woke up every soul in the house.

Old David Bosworth recognized his son's voice, and opened the door for him. Mabel and Myrtis, hearing the disturbance in the house, had arisen and dressed themselves. They lost no time in seeking the presence of their brother, who told about the occurrences of the night, including the discovery, capture, and escape of Rube from the British.

"He is the worst rebel in Virginia," he declared, and must be hunted down, and——"

"But he spared your life, brother," said Mabel, her eyes brightening, and the rich glow mounting her cheeks.

"So he did, and that's what puzzles me. He is brave and reckless to a degree."

"He is the man who saved sister night before last, brother," said Myrtis.

Captain Bosworth started and gazed at Mabel. The tell-tale blood betrayed her secret, and the gallant young officer turned ashen-hued as he saw it.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TERRORS OF A NIGHT.

The discovery of his sister's secret came like a thunderbolt to young Captain Bosworth.

"Sister," he said, in husky tones, "you love that man?"

"Yes, with all my heart and soul," she replied; "and he is worthy of all the love I can give him."

"He is a rebel—a traitor to his king!" exclaimed the brother, indignantly.

"He is a patriot!" she answered, "defending his country against a tyrant. Did it never occur to you, brother, that in being loyal to your king you were a traitor to your country? The man who fights against his country is a traitor, and sooner or later will be dealt with as such. Brother, you are fighting against your country," and with that shot Mabel retired to her room, followed by her sister.

She was terribly agitated. So were her parents. They gave their son the story of Mabel's acquaintance with Rube Rattling; of how he saved the house from destruction—how he saved her horse; how she saved his life when he was about to be shot—and last, but not least, how he in turn saved her life and honor.

"He is brave and daring," the father added, "and we are——"

"No one can doubt his courage," said the captain. "But he is a rebel, and has so poisoned her mind that she, too, talks treason. Oh, I would rather have died in battle than live to see and hear what I have seen and heard to-night! But he shall never marry her while I live!" and the captain gave emphasis to his words by gestures that attested the strength of his feelings in the matter. "I will seek him out and slay him as I would a viper!"

The captain then wrote a note to the general, and gave it to a negro with orders to take it to the British camp at once.

Then a wagon was made ready with clean straw in it for the wounded men, and a jug of water and rum added.

"Drive as fast as you can," Captain Bosworth said to the darky driver, and soon the wagon was rumbling over the frozen ground at a tremendous rate. When they reached the spot where the terrible tragedy had taken place they found that one of the five wounded men had breathed his last.

Only four remained alive. These were tenderly lifted up and placed on the straw in the wagon, and then they moved slowly off up the road, leaving the dead where they had fallen.

They had nearly reached the Bosworth farm when they heard the roar of a cavalry rush ahead of them, and two or three minutes later Major Lansing dashed up at the head of three hundred dragoons.

"Do you know which way the rebels went, captain?" the major asked.

"They crossed the river at Robinson's ferry, a couple of miles below here. Give me a horse and I will go with you."

"Thanks. My orderly rides a good horse. Take that. Or—

derly, take charge of the wounded and convey them to camp. Forward, dragoons!"

Captain Bosworth sprang into the saddle and led the headlong charge down the road. The major and the dragoons came thundering along at his heels. A detail had been ordered to bury the dead soldiers, the rest hurrying on.

Old Robinson was in his cabin by the river bank when the major knocked on the door. Robinson came to the door and recognized Captain Bosworth. He knew him well from boyhood.

"Robinson," said the young captain to the old ferryman, "you knew Rube Rattling's game to-night."

"No, captain, I did not," said the old man. "I did not even know he was in that party. He kept back in the crowd, and never spoke a word to me."

"Come," cried the major, "get your boat ready to take us over. How many horses can you carry over at one trip?"

"About twenty."

"That will take time. Be in a hurry, or it may be the worse for you!"

Robinson hastened to obey the order, for he knew that the officers were not in a humor to be trifled with.

Then twenty men carefully led their horses into the flat, and held them there whilst the old ferryman began pulling across.

The boat was worked by means of a rope that was stretched from shore to shore, and fastened to trees on either side. By pulling on the rope the float-boat was propelled across the stream. It was just before the beginning of dawn, and was, therefore, quite dark. It was impossible to see even half-way across the river. Huge cakes of ice kept grinding against the boat.

"It is too heavy for me, sir," said Robinson at last, to the young captain. "Unless some of your men help me, we will not be able to make it."

Without waiting for orders three or four men seized hold of the rope and began to pull against the current and floating ice.

Suddenly the rope parted over on the bank they were approaching, and two of the men who held on to it were pulled overboard. Quick as a flash the floating ice crushed them under the boat. An exclamation of anger burst from old Robinson.

"The rope has parted, sir!" he cried, turning to the major and Captain Bosworth.

"Have you lost your grip on it?" the major asked.

"Yes, sir."

"You ought to be shot! Why did you not hold on to it?"

"Because I didn't wish to be dragged overboard, sir."

"Two men were dragged over!" cried several at once.

"What's to be done?" the major asked. "Can we get over at all?"

"No, sir. I have two poles on board. We may reach the shore when we float far enough down the river to get out of the channel."

"Why not use your poles now?" Captain Bosworth asked.

"Because they are not long enough. The river is very deep here, as you well know."

The heavily laden flat-boat floated down the river amid a field of ice-cakes.

"This is a crime!" angrily exclaimed the major, "and I will hold you responsible for it, ferryman!"

Robinson made no reply. He was deeply troubled.

"It is growing lighter, major," said Captain Bosworth. "We can see sufficiently well in another hour to enable us to work our way to the land."

"I hope so," was the quiet reply.

By and by it did grow lighter, and the weary redcoats felt but little better for the view that met their eyes. Fields of floating ice carried them steadily down the stream. Here and

there the boat would get caught in an eddy of deep water and be whirled around, grinding against the ice as if destruction was taking place.

The somber twilight of dawn finally gave way to the gray of the coming day, and found the flat-boat several miles down the river, floating with the current.

A sharp bend in the stream sent the boat whirling round and round in an eddy till it struck a snag.

A corner was carried under by the current, and in another moment the score of men and horses were struggling for life in the mass of broken ice and water.

It was a terrible scene. Yells and imprecations filled the air, as men and beasts struggled in the water. Only half of them escaped, though the shore was but fifty feet away.

The officers and ten men got safely ashore, more dead than alive, only to find themselves seized by a band of patriots, against whom they could make no resistance.

CHAPTER XX.

RUBE AND HIS PRISONER.

"Great God!" exclaimed Major Elkins, on finding himself a prisoner after the perils of the night. "Why did I not perish in the river?"

"Because a man born to be hanged will never be drowned, major," replied a cheery voice behind him.

Captain Bosworth wheeled around to look at the speaker. He recognized the voice.

"Rube Rattling!" he exclaimed, in dumfounded amazement.

"Captain Bosworth!" cried Rube, as much astounded as the other. "You here? You have violated your parole!"

"You had no right to parole me or any other soldier," retorted the captain.

"I am a regular soldier in the Continental Army," said Rube, "and as such have the right to parole any prisoner I may capture. But whether I have the right or not, you gave me your word of honor, as a soldier, that you would not take up arms again until regularly exchanged."

"I did not regard anything as binding under the circumstances that threw me into your hands last night," was the haughty reply of the young officer.

Major Elkins just then turned to Rube, and asked:

"Is it in your power to afford us a fire to dry ourselves by? We are actually freezing."

"Yes, major," said Rube. "You are a brave soldier. We will have a fire at once."

There was an immense pile of driftwood near the scene of the disaster. Rube ordered his men to set it on fire.

They did so, and while it was gradually blazing up into a conflagration our hero, unperceived by the prisoners, whispered to old Robinson:

"I will pretend to be angry with you, and make believe that you are a regular old loyal Tory. You must lean that way."

"I understand," said the old ferryman, giving him a knowing wink. "Be very hard on me, and I'll be very much scared."

In a little while our hero began to abuse the old ferryman for aiding the British in pursuing him.

"We are your neighbors and friends," he said, "and yet you do not hesitate to aid the redcoats against us."

"I own the ferry," said the old man, "and my business is to put anybody over the river who pays for it. While I am not a rebel, I am not fighting against you nor doing you any harm. I put you across as quick as I could, because you said you were in a hurry."

"Yes; and if I had not cut your rope last night you would soon have had a whole troop of horse thundering at our heels."

"The deuce! Did you cut that rope, Rube Rattling?" the old man exclaimed.

"Yes, of course I did; and then we followed you through the woods, guided by your voices."

"You have destroyed my ferry," said the old ferryman, "and taken the bread out of my mouth."

"Better lose your bread, old man, than have a tyrant triumph over the liberties of your country," remarked Rube.

"So you cut that rope, did you?" Major Elkins asked, turning to Rube, after the latter had finished speaking with old Robinson.

"Yes; I knew your people would pursue us, and so waited at the river for you. Was it not the proper thing for a soldier to do under the circumstances?"

The major made no answer.

As soon as the clothes of the prisoners were dry, Rube began to make preparations to convey them to a place of safety, where he could turn them over to some superior officer.

Late that afternoon they met scouts from Lafayette's command—which had been sent to look after Arnold and capture him if possible. To them Rube delivered the prisoners and a portion of their guard, together with a detailed report of the situation up to that hour.

"Give this to the general," he said to one of the scouts, handing him a sealed packet. "I will go back and watch the enemy, and report again. Tell the general that Colonel Thayer will tell him all about me if he does not know me."

The scout took the packet and went on in charge of the prisoners.

On leaving the prisoners in charge of the scouts, Rube whispered to one of them:

"If you can manage to let Captain Bosworth escape, do so. It will do no harm."

The scout agreed, and then Rube made his way to the house of a friend, where he obtained a warm meal and a night's lodging. On the morrow he struck out for the river, intending to go over to the south side.

He was about five miles from the river, trudging along the road, when he espied Pete, the negro, coming toward him. The darky had a broad grin on his face as he approached.

He explained to Rube that when he had escaped he had made his way back to the Bosworth's, but Miss Mabel had told him to go and find Rube and stay with him.

Rube's heart throbbed with a wild joy at this evidence of the love and devotion of Mabel. He knew she was dauntless and true, but this little act showed to what length she would go for him. Pete told him of the family rumpus the young captain kicked up when he learned that Mabel was a rank rebel, and engaged to be married to the scout.

"Dem Britishers is all gwine erway ober dar," said Pete, after a pause of several minutes.

"Gone away! Have they moved away from the camp?"

"Yes, an' dey went like dey was in er mighty big hurry."

"That's good news!" exclaimed Rube. "The presence of the young marquis has done that. We may catch the great traitor after all!"

Pete listened to the comments of the scout, and answered his questions as best he could.

"How did you get across the river, Pete?" Rube asked.

"I'se done gone an' stole a boat," was the reply.

Rube resolved to make Pete lead the way back to the river and cross to the south side. Pete found the canoe where he had concealed it, and together they crossed over to the other side.

But not wishing to let the fact that he was on that side of the river be known to anyone but Mabel Bosworth, he kept

concealed in the woods till the shadows of night would afford him some protection.

When the stars came out, he sent Pete to the house to inform Mabel that he was near by.

"Tell her I will come to the house if she thinks best," said he, "or to the barn, if she wishes to keep it secret. Do you understand me, Pete?"

"Yes, sah," and Pete hurried off.

Mabel was sitting before the fire with her knitting, thinking of her lover and the implacable hate of her brother toward him, when one of the house servants passed her chair and gently touched her on the shoulder.

A minute later she arose and followed the girl into another room.

"What is it, Becky?" she asked.

"Dat nigger Pete done come," answered Becky, in low tones. Mabel started, as if an electric shock had touched her.

"Where is he?" she demanded.

"Out in de yard."

Mabel flew out into the yard and ran up against the faithful black. In a moment she had her lover's message.

"Tell him to come boldly up to the house and knock at the front door," she said. "I will open it for him."

Pete hurried away, and Mabel returned to the house, her heart in a wild flutter. Seating herself by the fire again, she quietly waited and listened. Suddenly she heard footsteps, and the next moment a vigorous rap on the door. Quick as a flash she sprang up and flew to open the door.

"Oh, Reuben, my hero!" she cried, and then was clasped in his strong arms in a passionate embrace.

A half-smothered exclamation escaped old David Bosworth's lips as he beheld the daring scout once more under his roof. Mrs. Bosworth said not a word, but looked uneasily at her husband. Myrtis went forward and gave her hand to the scout. She could not forget that he had saved Mabel's life and honor. But the old Tory was implacable, and the sight of his daughter's arms around the scout's neck infuriated him.

"Why do you come here?" he asked, trying to keep cool and not blaze forth with the venom that was in him.

"To see her who saved my life, sir," said Rube, holding to Mabel's hand.

"I forbid you my house, sir. Never dare set foot across my threshold again. You are a rebel and sneaking murderer!"

"Your gray hairs protect you, sir, or I would make you take back those words."

"Never. Leave my house, sir!" and the old man fairly blazed with wrath.

"Wait, Reuben," said Mabel, her face white as a sheet, "till I get together a few things, and I will go with you. Where you go I will go, and——"

"My daughter—my child!" cried Mrs. Bosworth, springing forward and throwing her arms around Mabel's neck. "you shall not leave me thus! No, no, no!"

The door flew open and a man dashed in.

"Oh, brother!" screamed Myrtis, flying to his arms. The newcomer threw her aside and faced Rube, hissing:

"Ah, traitor; we meet again!"

CHAPTER XXI.

RATTLING RUBE IN HOT QUARTERS.

The reader will recollect that when Rattling Rube turned his prisoners over to Lafayette's scouts he whispered to one that he would like to have Captain Bosworth make his escape before they reached headquarters with him. The brave scout

knew that Rube had some good reason for such action, and therefore resolved to afford the captain an opportunity to get away.

The prisoner was most anxious to escape, as he knew he had made himself liable for violating his parole. He therefore lost no time in looking about for a favorable chance.

It soon occurred.

He slipped away into a clump of bushes which they were passing through, and disappeared without being perceived.

Once free, he made quick time in getting away from the dangerous locality. But he kept well in the woods all day, fearing to venture out lest his uniform should betray him to the patriots.

But when the mantle of night enveloped the forest he stole forth and made his way to the river. There he hunted along the banks till he found a canoe concealed under the willows. In that he crossed over to the south side, and hastened to his parent's home.

He was amazed at seeing Rube there, and glared at him with all the concentrated hate of his nature.

"We meet again!" he hissed through his clenched teeth. "But I am unarmed!"

"It makes no difference, Captain Bosworth," said Rube, very coolly. "I would not fight you for reasons you, perhaps, know."

"For that very reason I would fight you to the death, traitor and sneak that you are!"

"Captain Bosworth, you know I am no traitor; you know I am neither a sneak nor a coward, as you have twice been my prisoner within forty-eight hours. You also know that you are no match for me in a fight, and——"

"Liar! braggart! coward!" cried the young officer, beside himself with rage. "You dare not meet me! You dare not cross swords with me!"

Rube merely smiled.

Myrtis was pale and speechless with fear, as was her mother. But Mabel was blazing with indignation at hearing her lover so mercilessly abused.

"Brother," she exclaimed, "you are a cowardly ingrate! This man saved the roof over our heads. He saved my life and honor by slaying my would-be destroyer who wore that uniform. Yet you pursue him with your hate—you, a traitor to your country!"

"No—no—it's you, Mabel, who brings disgrace upon our family by your conduct! He is a rebel and a traitor to his king! If he will not fight me I will brand him as a coward before the world!" and with that he sprang forward and slapped Rube in the face.

"Now will you fight!" he cried.

Rube started as if an electric shock had struck him. The next moment he sprang at the young captain and dealt him a blow that stretched him senseless at his feet.

All three women uttered screams of terror.

With an imprecation on his lips David Bosworth sprang forward to his son's assistance, raising a heavy oaken chair high above his head.

With a wild cry Mabel sprang forward, caught the chair and clung to it.

"No—no, father!" she screamed. "You shall not strike him!"

"If he does I will kill him," said Rube, in such a quiet, determined tone that even the irate old man drew back in terror. "I have proved myself your friend when you needed friends, David Bosworth. I was prepared, for Mabel's sake, to endure all the taunts and insults you could heap upon me; but not blows—that I cannot endure. Even now it can be peace between us. But if you or yours seek to do me violence I will crush you as I would a viper!"

A noise at the front door caused all to look in that direction. The negroes who had crowded around on hearing the shrieks and screams of the mother and daughter now scattered, as if a new danger threatened.

The next moment a dozen patriot scouts rushed into the house and seized Captain Bosworth. His British uniform and rank made his captors hilarious.

"Hang him! He is a traitor! All Tories are traitors! Our houses have been burned to the ground and our people murdered by Benedict Arnold and his Tory followers. Hang him! Hang him!"

"Oh, my poor boy—my poor boy!" cried his mother, throwing herself in his arms.

"This is a Tory family!" cried one of the patriots. "David Bosworth is a traitor! The traitor Arnold spared his house and burned ours. Let's burn him out!"

"Yes, burn him out! Hello, here's Rattling Rube! How are you, Rube? The traitor is moving up the river. Lafayette is after him. We'll hang him if we catch him!"

All of them had heard of Rube, the scout and spy. Three or four of the party knew him. They crowded around him and shook his hand.

"What are you doing here, Rube?" the leader of the patriots asked.

"I came to pay a visit to this young lady—Miss Bosworth," the scout replied, pointing to Mabel at his side.

"Does she live here?"

"Yes, this is her home."

"Sorry for that. We are going to burn the house."

"I beg your pardon—the house will not be burned."

"Why not?"

"Because Miss Bosworth is a true patriot, though the rest of her family are loyalists."

"How is that?"

"She is to be my wife. Loving me, she loves my cause. I will fight for her and her home."

"So will I, by gum!" exclaimed a young man in the party. "There's my hand on that!" and he extended his brawny hand to the scout.

"So will I—and I—and I!" cried a dozen others. "Hurrah for Rube's sweetheart!"

The cheers were given with a heartiness that caused Mabel to blush and smile by turns. Then they shook hands with her, and assured her of their good will and friendship.

"You will spare my brother, will you not?" she asked.

"We will simply keep him a prisoner till he is exchanged. No harm shall come to him from that."

Then they led the prisoner forth, and left Rube still with Mabel and her people.

CHAPTER XXII.

RUBE WINS IN THE FAMILY ROW.

Mrs. Bosworth, on seeing her son led away a prisoner, burst into tears and sank down into a chair.

"Don't cry, mamma," cried Myrtis, her own tears streaming down her face. "He will not be a prisoner long. Mr. Rattling can get him released. He does not bear him any ill-will—do you, Mr. Rattling?"

"None in the least," replied our hero.

"And you have saved our home again. Oh, I thank you ever so much!" and Myrtis grasped his hand and pressed it in a generous, grateful way.

Mabel threw her arms around her sister's neck and kissed her.

"My sweet sister, I shall always love you," she murmured.

"And you won't leave us, Mabel, will you?" Myrtis asked.
 "Yes, unless father consents to receive Reuben as I wish. I am going to be his wife, even if I never see one of my own kin again."

Old David Bosworth loved his proud, beautiful, self-willed daughter, and had not the heart to resist her longer. He looked her in the face and asked:

"You would leave us for that man?"

"Yes, father. I love him. He is brave, true and loyal, and worthy of my love and your respect. Why will you seek to wreck my happiness? You cannot love me and yet hate the man I love!"

"Stay, stay—both of you!" said the stern old man, his voice choked with emotion.

A glad cry from mother and daughters, and the next moment they were locked in each other's arms, weeping for very joy.

"Mr. Bosworth," said Rube, extending his hand to the old Tory, "while I war against the king, there is no bitterness in my heart against you or your son."

David Bosworth took the proffered hand and pressed it, but did not utter a word. He seemed afraid to trust his voice.

But the moment they had clasped hands Mabel, with another glad cry, threw her arms around her parent's neck and kissed him.

"How happy you have made me!" was all she said, but that was enough. The old man pressed her to his heart and wept like a child.

Rube snatched a kiss from her lips and bolted out of the house, as if a sudden emergency had arisen that called him forth. Out in the yard Pete awaited him, like the faithful darky he was. His young mistress had bidden him follow and serve the daring scout, and naught but death could deter him. Rube started off up the road toward Richmond, Pete close at his heels.

Ere midnight came the brave scout found out which direction the enemy had taken. He saw the light of burning houses in the distance away on the right.

Arnold had crossed the river just below the city, and went sweeping around like a living torch, bent on complete destruction.

The road to Richmond being thus clear, the scout hastened forward, and soon entered the city. He found that his constant reports, sent in by couriers, had kept the commandant so well informed of the movements of the enemy that not a single mistake had been made.

"General Lafayette is coming by quick marches," said the commandant to the scout. "You must go and meet him, and place these dispatches in his hand," and with that he gave him a packet, which Rube thrust into the bosom of his coat.

"You must take a horse, hasten down the river, cross the north side and pass the enemy on his right. You can reach the general quicker by that route. You will find good horses ready for you as soon as you are ready to start."

In ten minutes they were riding at full tilt down the river road, the scout in advance.

On the way down, they stopped, and secured the favorite horse of Mabel. A farmer, on the edge of the swamp, had looked after him, and was rewarded by the scout.

It was a little after daylight when they reached the Bosworth plantation. Mabel was soundly sleeping. Rube left her horse in the stable and a message of love for her, and then sped away on his mission, with black Pete thundering at his heels.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPTURED AGAIN.

There being no flat-boat now at Robinson's ferry, our hero had to ride about ten miles farther down the road ere he could

get across. But once on the other side, he put spurs to his horse and rode like John Gilpin.

Mile after mile was passed, and white flecks of foam began to fly from his horse.

Suddenly two men sprang out into the middle of the road, leveled rifles at his head, and called a halt:

"Where are you going so fast?" one of them demanded.

"After a doctor," he said. "My mother is very sick."

"Who is your mother?" one asked.

"Good Heavens, what a question! Why, she is my mother—my father's wife."

Both men looked hard at him a moment or two and then at each other. The next moment they burst into a roar of laughter.

"It won't do, young man," said the taller of the two men, shaking his head. "You are our prisoner. Get down off that horse."

"What right have you to inter—"

"The right of war! Get down, or you'll get a bullet through your head."

The very emphatic tone of the man, coupled with the fact that his rifle was pointed so as to back his words, induced our hero to dismount.

"Now, who are you and where are you going?" was demanded of him as soon as his feet touched the ground.

"I am a patriot," he answered.

"And a spy!" hastily ejaculated the other.

"How can I be a spy when I am not in the lines of either army?"

"What is your name?"

"Williams."

"Where do you live?"

"Over on James river."

"Where are you going?"

"I don't know. That depends on where you take me."

"You think you will be taken somewhere, then, do you?"

"Yes, of course. The fools are not all dead yet."

"That's true; but we are thinning them out some."

They marched him into the woods, where, on making a signal, they were joined by others from the dense forest further back. In a few moments Rube saw that he had fallen into the hands of a body of Tories.

"Wait till the captain comes up," said one, as a movement to search him was made by one of the men.

"Here comes the captain!" cried another, as a man in the uniform of a British captain came through the bushes.

Rube glanced at the officer and started.

He was Captain Bosworth.

"Ha!" ejaculated the young captain, as he recognized the prisoner. "I have got you at last, you traitor."

"I see you have the mark of my hand on your face yet," said Rube, very coolly, "when I knocked you down for calling me a traitor."

"You will not do any more knocking down. Comrades, this man is Rube Rattling, the notorious rebel scout and spy, of whom you have heard so much."

A murmur of surprise was heard all round the prisoner, and the Tories crowded forward to get a good look at him.

They had all heard of him and his daring exploits, and knew that he had done much toward frustrating their plans in the past. Rube was greatly puzzled at seeing Captain Bosworth there in command of a band of Tories. He thought he was a prisoner either in Richmond, or in Lafayette's camp.

"It was lucky that I was rescued by a party of king's men last night," said the captain to Rube, "for now we can settle our differences forever."

"No," said Rube, looking him full in the face, "we can never settle them while I am a prisoner. You will never allow me

the chance to defend myself against you. I know you, Bosworth. You are a coward and poltroon!"

Bosworth would have sprung upon him, but Rube was not bound, and so he dared not get within striking distance of him.

"You shall die the death you deserve—that of a traitor and spy. I have seen you in disguise in the British camp. You are also a negro-thief—there stands a negro who belongs to my father," and he pointed to Pete, who stood by trembling for his life.

"Hang him! Hang him!" cried the Tories, now wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement.

"Yes, you can hang me," said Rube, very coolly, "and I can't help myself. But you men ought to understand the cause of his hate toward me, and——"

"Oh, they care nothing for that," said Bosworth, interrupting him.

Then, turning to the men he added:

"He wanted to marry my sister. The whole family objects to have a traitor come into it. Hang him, and you will confer a favor on us as well as a blessing on the country."

"Yes—yes—hang him!" and they at once seized him for the purpose of executing their vengeance.

A rope was quickly produced and placed around his neck, whilst his hands were tied behind him.

Captain Bosworth glared at him with a malignity that surprised Rube. There was an expression of fiendish joy in his face and eyes.

"I am not afraid to die," Rube said, looking him full in the face. "I have but one regret. That is that I have twice spared your life when you were my prisoner."

"But I never asked you to spare me, did I?"

"No—nor do I. Pete will tell your sister how I died at your hands. I do not envy you your lease of life."

"I will tell her all about it myself. She will learn to detest your memory before the worms have finished their meal on your carcass. String him up, men! Let him die the death of a traitor!"

They led him a little further into the woods, and halted under a gigantic oak.

One end of the rope was thrown over a limb, and a half-dozen men seized it to draw him up.

"Surrender!"

A strong, manly voice thundered forth the command, and, on looking around, the startled Tories found themselves surrounded by at least half a hundred patriots, with leveled rifles.

"Surrender, or we fire!"

"Don't shoot! We surrender!" cried out nearly every man of them, throwing down their arms.

They had been so intent on witnessing the terrible crime they were bent on perpetrating that they did not see the approach of the patriots.

An officer in the uniform of the Continental army came forward and asked of Rube:

"Who are you, and what does this mean?"

"I am Rube Rattling, a patriot scout," he replied. "I was on my way with dispatches for General Lafayette, when these men captured me, an hour ago."

"And they were going to hang you?"

"Yes, I think they were."

"It looks like it," and turning to Bosworth, the officer asked:

"And were you going to permit the hanging?"

Bosworth made no reply.

He was in a terrible tight place.

The patriot officer had a very determined air about him, and looked as if he meant serious business.

"Mr. Rattling," said the Continental officer, "take that rope from around your neck and put it on this redcoat."

"My hands are tied."

A patriot sprang forward and cut the cords that bound his hands.

"Now you can do it."

"I don't wish to hang him, sir," said Rube, as he removed the rope from his neck.

"But I do!" retorted the officer. "Your duty is to obey orders."

CHAPTER XXIV.

DEATH OF CAPTAIN BOSWORTH.

Rube glared at the brother of Mabel Bosworth and shuddered. He dreaded the consequences of obeying the order of the patriot officer. Yet he knew that to disobey meant death to him. He stepped forward and threw the noose over his neck.

"You dare not do it!" gasped Bosworth.

"I have no desire to do it, on Mabel's account," replied Rube, "but I dare not disobey orders."

"You can save me!"

"No; I cannot."

"You will try?"

"No."

"You will!"

"I will not. But I will ask to be excused from being your executioner. That's all."

They had spoken in whispers, so that not a word had been overheard by the patriots.

"What is he saying?" the patriot officer asked.

"Begging me to plead with you for him."

"And you refused?"

"I did."

"Right. Nothing can save him. String him up!"

"I am an officer in the British army!" exclaimed Bosworth. "You dare not hang me!"

"You shall have the same treatment you were going to give to your prisoner just now. Up with him. The sooner America hangs all such, the better for her cause."

"Captain," said Rube to the patriot officer, stepping up to his side, "I beg to be excused from hanging that man."

"Why so? He would have hanged you."

Rube leaned forward and whispered in the officer's ear:

"His sister is to be my wife."

"Ah! I will excuse you!" exclaimed the captain, grasping the scout's hand.

Then, turning to a sergeant, he ordered him to run up the victim.

Bosworth dropped to his knees and begged for his life.

"What! A British officer on his knees to a rebel! Run him up, sergeant."

"Mercy! mercy!" screamed the prisoner. "I will join your army, and——"

"We have no use for such as you," returned the patriot officer. "Run him up, sergeant!"

The sergeant motioned to several others, and in a moment a half dozen men were tugging at the rope.

As the body of the implacable young man swung clear of the ground, Rattling Rube turned away with a shudder, saying:

"I am sorry you did not spare him, captain."

"I never spare such men," was the reply. "Whenever I catch men who have hanged any of our friends, or tried to do so, I give them the rope."

"Yes—yes; it's right, I know, but it may blast all my hopes of the future."

"It need not do so. I will give a written statement that you

not only did not have anything to do with it, but that you actually tried to save him."

"Thanks, captain, but I fear it will do no good," and the brave scout turned away with a mournful shake of the head.

The body was left hanging to the limb when the patriots moved away, as a warning to Tories that hanging was a game that two could play at.

Once more free our hero proceeded on his way with his dispatches. He received information from the young patriot captain that enabled him to find Lafayette with but little trouble.

The gallant young marquis received him with that urbane politeness for which he was famous. The dispatches greatly pleased him, and, after he had carefully perused them, he questioned Rube about the topography of the country, the strength of the enemy, and the resources of the patriots.

Rube's replies showed that he was well posted, and the young general at once engaged him as his scout in his campaign against Benedict Arnold.

"Above all things we desire to capture that arch-traitor," said Lafayette, in a private conversation with Rube, "and if I can get together a certain number of men within thirty days I shall have great hope of success."

"I have already had him by the throat," said Rube.

"Eh? Had him by the throat?"

"Yes, general, and gave his throat the tightest squeeze he ever felt, I guess," and then the scout related the story of his adventure in Arnold's camp and his remarkable escape.

Lafayette was amazed.

"Such heroism and endurance must be rewarded," he exclaimed, in real French enthusiasm. "I make you captain. His Excellency will confirm my choice, and your commission shall be forthcoming. You shall have command of the scouts."

Rube was so surprised that for a moment or two he could say nothing in reply.

"Organize your command at once, Captain Rattling," said the marquis, bowing to him.

"Your Excellency," stammered Rube, the moment he regained his speech, "I do not deserve this."

"Indeed you do, my friend. It is a mistake that you have not had a commission and a command long before this. You shall have one hundred men just as soon as you can collect them."

Rube did not know that a few words in the dispatches he had brought had been the real cause of his promotion. He thanked the marquis and retired.

By degrees he got used to the change in his fortunes, and began to organize a company of one hundred scouts. Scores of brave, daring young fellows volunteered to join him when they heard the story of his adventures.

In a week's time he had his command organized and ready for the field. Pete was to be his body-servant and go wherever he went, and a happier dandy was never seen than he.

"Captain Rattling," said the marquis one day, "the fleet is come to the mouth of James river to cut off Arnold's retreat back to New York. The people are arming for the struggle. Take your men and hang close on his flanks, striking whenever you can, and send in couriers every day."

Such an order was just what the daring young patriot was waiting for. In a new uniform, which the general had procured for him, he sprang into the saddle and dashed away at the head of his men.

A few hours' ride brought him to the vicinity of Arnold's camp. The enemy had been marching, and burning, and pillaging all day. Their campfires for the night had just been made, and not one of the host suspected the presence of an enemy.

Suddenly a thunderous roar of one hundred horse on a

furious charge startled them. The next moment the patriots were upon them, sabering right and left.

The very daring of the attack was the safety of the assailants.

Not dreaming that one hundred men would dare attack five times that number, caused that wing of the camp to fly in disorder. They rushed over on the center, and rallied a thousand strong.

But in another minute the patriots had disappeared on the other side of the camp, without the loss of a single man. Over a score of the enemy had been killed or wounded, and the rage of their officers was unbounded.

CHAPTER XXV.

ARNOLD'S NARROW ESCAPE.

The incident of the furious charge through a portion of their camp made the enemy more cautious.

Strong guards were so placed as to render such a feat impossible again.

There were few better soldiers than the great traitor, and no one knew that fact better than Captain Rattling himself.

He drew off his men to a secure place, and set careful scouts to watch any movements the enemy might make.

The French fleet had started from Rhode Island to cut off his retreat back to New York.

He knew that Washington was laying a snare to catch him.

Sir Henry Clinton saw the storm gathering, and sent the British fleet to head off the French men-of-war.

The French fleet were worsted at Craney Island, and returned. The British fleet then landed Colonel Phillips with two thousand men to reinforce Arnold.

That accession increased his available force to over three thousand five hundred men—too strong entirely for the little army under the marquis.

But Lafayette presented such a bold front, and hung so close on Arnold's flanks, that Lord Cornwallis, whom Greene had driven from the Carolinas, hastened to Virginia to take command. Thus the raid of Arnold, and the desperate attempt to capture him, hastened the concentration of both Washington and Cornwallis' armies in eastern Virginia.

The campaign was to be the climax of the war, for it was to end at Yorktown, on the banks of York river.

But before the two main armies concentrated in Virginia, months of marches, retreats, and running fights were to take place. By order of Lafayette our hero kept close by the enemy, and gave him a blow whenever a chance afforded.

Whichever way Arnold went, there the indomitable scouts confronted. Whenever a party of Tories and British made a dash to burn a house or pillage a barn, the scouts were sure to make a charge and leave some of them dead on the ground.

One day Captain Rattling, still more widely known now as "Rattling Rube," received information from a negro that Arnold was stopping at a farmhouse for the night, just beyond Chickahominy Creek.

His staff was with him, and a considerable bodyguard, whilst the main body of his army lay nearly a half mile back of the house.

"It's a dangerous thing to do," said Rube to his lieutenants, "but I am going to try it."

"Try what?" his officers asked.

"To either kill or capture Arnold. He is in the Berkeley House over the creek there. We can make a dash and get him."

"It may result in our destruction," one of them said.

"No danger of that," he replied. "There's about one hundred men around the house. A sudden dash will send them flying. Long before they recover from their surprise and confusion, we can finish the traitor and get away."

They waited until about midnight, and then made a detour of some five or six miles, so as to come upon the enemy from the south side.

With a negro guide who knew every inch of the locality, our hero led his brave fellows silently toward the camp of the sleeping host.

"Dar's de house," said the negro, when they came in sight of the farm-house in which Arnold and his staff lay sleeping.

The line of sentinels extended a considerable distance from the house, and ere the patriots were aware of their exact location they were promptly challenged.

Rube was somewhat surprised.

But he gave the order to charge, and the scouts dashed forward like an avalanche.

The sentinels discharged their muskets, and gave the alarm.

The surprised redcoats sprang to arms, but the gallant scouts were upon them, sabering right and left.

"To the house—surround the house!" cried Rube, in stentorian tones.

But his men were in the midst of the dumfounded redcoats, who knew not which way to run. They were pushed back against the house, into which they burst, still hoarsely shouting, whilst the patriots were cutting right and left with a terrible energy.

At the first alarm, Benedict Arnold sprang out of bed and hurried on his clothes.

Just as he was emerging from his room, his own men, hard pressed by the scouts, rushed into the house. The next moment, bare-headed and minus his pistols, he was driven helter-skelter into the back yard.

There a dozen mounted patriots were cutting right and left, trying to stem the current of retreat.

He escaped, having his head laid open by dodging under a horse's belly, and hastened at the top of his speed toward the main body of his army.

Thinking they had the arch-traitor hemmed up in the house, the patriots resolutely cut their way in and searched every room.

"Foiled!" roared Rube. "He has escaped! Come away, men, ere it is too late!"

The patriots sprang into saddle again, and, at the command of their gallant leader, dashed away down the road.

They had not left a moment too soon.

In fact, they came near delaying a minute too long.

The impetuous Arnold knew for what purpose the dash had been made, and his soul ached to wreak a terrible vengeance on the daring scouts.

He knew that Rube was the same man who had throttled him down on the James River, and would give half his command to capture him.

"On, on, men!" he cried, his voice hoarse with rage. "One hundred pounds to him who brings down that fellow!"

But Rube had the start of the three hundred dragoons, and raised such a cloud of dust that the pursuers dared not get too far into it. After a dash of a couple of miles, the dragoons returned, without having killed or captured a single scout.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

The dash was so audacious, and came so near proving his destruction, that Benedict Arnold never again dared sleep anywhere but in the very heart of his camp.

The American commander was so pleased at the affair that Rube was made a major, and given command of a battalion.

The troubles kept gathering, and the great traitor began his retreat toward the mouth of James river. He dare not remain longer, with even the force under him, but embarked on board the English fleet and sailed for New York.

But the effort to capture him was now turned toward the main army under Cornwallis. Washington had suddenly made a break for Virginia. The French fleet had made another, and this time a successful effort to get into York river, and thus cut off the British fleet from interfering.

Sir Henry Clinton, in command in New York, sought in vain to overtake Washington. He returned to the city, and tried to draw the patriot commander-in-chief from his purpose by sending Arnold on a raid into Connecticut. But the sagacious chief was not to be diverted from his purpose.

When Lord Cornwallis laid down his arms at Yorktown, Rube was at the head of a regiment of brave Virginians.

The surrender was the breaking up of British effort in America. The news flew like wildfire all over the land, striking terror in the hearts of the Tories and joy to the patriots.

Rube was sent off up the river with his regiment to look after the marauding bands of Tories in that section. He met with no opposition, and in a week he was encamped at Robinson's Ferry, a few miles below the Bosworth plantation.

Since the death of her brother Mabel Bosworth had not seen Rattling Rube. The exigencies of the service had prevented him from visiting her. He was not sure that she would forgive him for not saving her brother's life.

Now that he was again in the vicinity of her home, he resolved to pay her a visit and learn his fate at her hands.

As he approached the old homestead, he saw evidence of the devastating march of the hated redcoats. The house had not been destroyed, but the barn and fences had, and so a dismal air pervaded everything about the place.

Riding up to the front of the house he dismounted, and was proceeding toward the door when it opened wide, and Mabel flew forth to meet him.

"My hero—my love—my heart," she cried, "they said you would not return to me!"

He clasped her to his heart and rained kisses all over her face.

"My soul's idol!" he exclaimed. "I am come to bow at your feet. My heart is yours till death. Will you receive it?"

"Yes—a thousand times yes!"

She led him into the house, where her stern old father sat brooding in his chair. The old man was changed almost beyond recognition. His face had wrinkled, and his hair was as white as snow.

"Rube Rattling, where is my boy?" the old man demanded.

"He has fallen in the war, like many thousands of other brave men," was the reply. "I have come to be as a son to you. Will you receive me as such?"

"Yes," said the heartbroken father, as tears coursed down his wrinkled face.

"A more dutiful son than I will be no man ever had," said Rube. And so he was.

He married Mabel, and made the old plantation bloom again like a garden, taking care of her parents till they died. Myrtis married and lived near to them, both sisters raising a family of happy children, to whom they recounted the exploits of "Rattling Rube," the scout.

THE END.

Read "THE DOOMED CITY; or, THE HIDDEN FOE OF PLUMMERDALE," by Howard Austin, which will be the next number (507) of "Pluck and Luck."

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THINGS OF INTEREST.

Lord Walsingham shares with Lord de Grey the honor of being the finest shot in Britain. He is probably the only man in the world who can, and does, shoot wasps on the wing. This, of course, requires a marvelous eye and the steadiest of hands. The weapon with which Lord Walsingham performs this wonderful feat is a miniature rifle which was specially constructed for him.

Few people, even physicians themselves, seem to know the principal reason why medical science condemns the use of feather beds in winter as well as in summer," said a New York physician recently. "It is because feather beds are highly hygroscopic—a rather formidable word, but one meaning simply that feathers readily absorb and condense moisture. The body is constantly throwing off waste matter through the skin and the lungs. The feathers in the bed will absorb this waste matter as readily as it will simple atmospheric moisture. The feathers retain the waste matter during the day when the bed is cold—even when it is aired, unless also warmed by sunshine during the time it is exposed to the air. At night when the body of the sleeper warms the bed the feathers renew their hygroscopic action and throw off the waste matter absorbed the night before. The susceptible body of the sleeper is soon surrounded by a dense and highly poisonous atmosphere, the accumulative effect of which cannot help but be very injurious. The skin, like the lungs, is continually breathing, and is very sensitive to external influences. Hence arises the need for air baths as well as for water baths. The entire body should be exposed to fresh air every day for as long a time as you can make possible, and all beds should be thoroughly ventilated."

George Kennan has a very interesting article in the current number of the Outlook from which we take the following: No serious attempt was made to teach mathematics in Chinese schools until after the war with Japan. At the public examinations for the degree of B. A. in the province of Shan-tung in 1892 the following arithmetical problem was set before the candidates: "If 8,600 quintals of rice are transported at 13 cents per quintal, and if the freight money be paid in rice at \$2.50 per quintal, how much rice will be expended for the freight?" Out of 10,000 candidates for the degree of B. A. only one attempted to solve this simple problem, and that one failed. And yet there was in existence before the birth of Confucius, a treatise on mathematics whose nine sections contained 246 problems in plane mensuration, mensuration of solids, proportion, alligation, equations, and trigonometry. China, therefore, had mathematical knowledge more than two and a half millenniums ago; but when education was restricted to the moral and philosophical books of Confucius and

Mencius, such knowledge was lost. If the reforming Emperor Shih-Huang-Ti had only succeeded in getting all the Confucian classics burned, mathematics might perhaps have had a chance. The disastrous war with Japan in 1895 was a serious shock to the old Chinese system of education, but even after that the high officials of the government still clung to the Confucian classics and refused to take the advice of their conquerors with regard to a reform in educational methods.

OUR COMIC COLUMN.

Teacher—Is there any connecting link between the animal and the vegetable kingdom? Bright Pupil—Yes, ma'am: there's hash.

"Screochem was a barker in a circus once, wasn't he?" "Yes." "When did he give up this line of continuous talk?" "When he married."

"Did you ever notice how Miss Talkley's tongue travels when she once gets started?" "I should say I did! It fairly skids."

Jiggers—Well, how do you like living in a flat? Jiggers—Great! Splendid! Jiggers—But you haven't as much room as you had in your house. Jiggers—That's just it—no room for my wife's relatives.

Rivers—Don't you get tired of hearing Weerius always telling his wonderful stories of adventure in the first person? Brooks—I don't mind that so much as his always telling them to the first person—he happens to meet.

A lady famed for her skill in cooking was entertaining a number of her friends at tea. Everything on the table was much admired, but the excellence of the sponge cake was especially the subject of remark. "Oh!" exclaimed one of the guests, "it is so beautifully soft and light! Do tell me where you got the recipe." "I am very glad," replied the hostess, "that you find it so soft and light. I made it out of my own head."

A little city boy and his sister Dorothy were taken to the country for the first time. The two children were happy as the day was long. In the late afternoon they watched the cows come home, heard with delight the tinkling cow-bells, and the little boy even went to the barns to see the milking done. At supper, just as Dorothy was lifting her glass to her rosy lips, the boy cried out: "Oh, Dotty, don't! You musn't drink that milk. It's not fit to drink. It came out of a cow: I saw it!"

On a hot day the members of a lunch club were gathered together at the little restaurant where they met. Everybody was listless, owing to the heat. Food charmed them not. One of the party, after scornful soup and waving away fish, put his feelings into words. "Wouldn't it be pleasant," he said, "if we could just gather around a table on hot days and sit for an hour or so without eating anything? Why don't people ever do that?" "They do," remarked another member, "in saloons."

A regular Mr. Malaprop recently came home from his first visit to Europe. He grew enthusiastic about Rome. "It was fine," he declared, "to go into them churches over there and see the old tombs—cigarophagusses, they call 'em. And then the Sixteen Chapel is great, and as for the Vaccination, where the Pope lives, well!" But his stock of compliments gave out when he got to the subject of beggars. "I always refused them pennies," he said, "because, you see, I didn't want to get a bad prestige!"

SAM'S SCHOOL.

What He Taught and what He Learned There

By PAUL BRADDON.

"Hurrah, mother! I've got my school, and now I can go to college after all."

Thus cried Sam Stickney as he burst into his mother's little cottage one evening in June, his face all aglow with excitement.

Sam was a smart young fellow of seventeen, tall and strong for his age, the only support of his widowed mother, and a boy full of ambition and high hopes.

The widow smiled at her son's enthusiasm, and while she busied herself with the preparations for supper, said:

"Is it the same one that you saw advertised, Sam?"

"Yes, mother, and I lost no time in seeing the committee and putting in an application. No one else had applied, and as I passed a satisfactory examination they gave me the school, and I am to open it on Monday."

"Do you think you will succeed as a schoolmaster, my boy?" asked the widow, anxiously.

"Why not? Plenty of young fellows at college take schools to push them ahead. I know enough, for they're all boys and young ones."

"There is much to learn as well as to teach, in keeping a school, Sam," said his mother, "To govern well one must have learned to obey, in the first place."

"Well, I never was a hard case at school, that I know," laughed Sam. "Just think of it, though! This school, with the money I have saved up, will take me through the first year at college, and take care of you besides. Then next summer I can get another school, and——"

"There, there, Sam, no more of your plans now. Come and eat your supper. I know that you have a good appetite, and talking will only increase it."

Sam and his mother lived on the outskirts of a large manufacturing town, of which the greater part of the inhabitants worked in factories and big shops, very few devoting themselves to mercantile or professional pursuits.

It was Sam's ambition to go to college, and enter one of the professions, his education, up to this time, having been conducted with that aim in view.

Two years before, however, when Sam had graduated from the preparatory school, and expected to enter the college in the succeeding fall, his father had died very suddenly, leaving his affairs considerably involved.

It had always been supposed that Mr. Stickney was well off, if not rich, but on his death it was discovered that there was a large mortgage on his property, and that he had besides given a note for a considerable sum to Simon Hardy, the holder of the mortgage.

"I am sure your father told me he had paid off the mortgage, Sam," said the widow. "He was speaking of it only the day before he died."

"Then we must find the receipt and the canceled mortgage, mother," answered the boy.

No such papers could be found among Mr. Stickney's papers, however, and after the funeral the widow found herself in very straightened circumstances.

Her entire fortune consisted of three hundred dollars, the house mortgaged for twenty-five hundred, and her own personal property, which, if sold, would scarcely bring three hundred more.

There was her husband's life insurance, to be sure, but the company, of which Mr. Hardy was one of the directors, claim-

ed that there was some irregularity in the papers, and refused to pay the claim without an investigation.

Sam's prospects received a considerable check, and it began to look as though the boy's cherished hopes of a college education would be blighted.

"I'll tell you what I will do, mother," he said, cheerily; "I'll go into the woollen mill for a year or so, save up enough to keep you, and then try and get a year at least in college. After that we can see what will happen."

"By that time our prospects ought to be brighter, Sam. Do you think you could stand the work? It is very hard."

"Yes, mother. I must stand it. A year or two won't make much difference, and I can keep up my studies in the meantime."

"It is very singular that your father should have left his affairs in such confusion," mused the widow. "He was usually so very methodical."

"It does appear odd," muttered Sam, "but no doubt things will come out all right."

They did not improve, however, for in a month Simon Hardy presented a mortgage and asked for his interest and also for the interest on the note.

The insurance company also postponed a settlement, and things looked very bad for the widow and her son.

Sam had gone into the mill and was doing fairly well, so that he was able to give the money lender what he asked and so put him off for another six months.

The outlook was not very pleasant, however, for it was easy to see that it would take nearly all of Sam's earnings to pay the interest on the note and mortgage, and leave him very little as a nest egg.

"I shall have to call upon your grandfather, I fear, Sam," said the widow one day, when matters looked bluer than ever. "I must do it for your sake, if not for my own."

"You must not!" said Sam, in a determined tone. "Your father cast you off when you married because he thought my father was beneath you. During all the time my father lived Mr. Howard held no communication with us, and now that father is dead I will receive nothing from him. It would be acknowledging that he was right and that we were wrong."

"But you are his rightful heir, Sam."

"There is my cousin Jack, mother. He is your brother's son, and has as good a claim as I."

"Yes, but there ought to be enough for you both."

"Well, I will never ask for my share," said Sam, decidedly. "I would rather work myself to skin and bone. However, if I fail and give out I will ask help for you, but not for myself. Only in case I give out, however."

So Sam worked in the mill for two years, and managed by untiring industry to save up considerable money, his mother adding to their little store by taking a lodger, by doing plain sewing, and by letting out the ground behind their cottage to a market gardener, the arrangement being advantageous to both parties.

Finally Sam saw an advertisement for a young man to teach a summer school for boys in a neighboring town, and, as the work in the mill was very light at this time, he determined to apply for the school.

He did so and succeeded, much to his delight, for the pay was very good, and his hopes seemed now about to be realized.

On the following Monday Sam presented himself in the school, and faced his prospective pupils.

There were twenty or thirty of them, and they ran from the age of six or eight up to his own, some of the larger boys being taller and stronger than himself.

The boys seemed an unruly lot, though belonging to what are generally termed the better classes, and Sam anticipated trouble from the start.

The majority of the boys were as large as himself, and one or two were larger and even older, and of the sort who needed a firm, strong hand to hold them in check.

In the forenoon Sam found out what his pupils knew, put them into classes, arranged hours for recitations, gave out lessons, and tried to put things into shape for the term.

In the afternoon he heard the smaller boys recite, laid down a few simple rules for the guidance of the school, and finally dismissed his charges with a short speech, asking them all to be on hand the next day, and expressing the hope that the school might be a prosperous one.

Then he went to his boarding-house, wrote a long letter to his mother, and spent the rest of the day in studying the lessons for the next day so as to be able to answer all knotty points that might arise.

The next morning the scholars were all on hand bright and early; before their teacher, in fact, and, though Sam did not know it, something was in the wind.

Presently a boy, larger and stronger than the rest, came in and said:

"This is all nonsense, fellows. Do you know who we've got to teach us? A factory hand, that's what! A low factory hand from Millville."

"He can't teach us then, Jack," cried one of the boys excitedly.

"Of course he can't. Look at him! Can he lick me, do you think? I guess not. If he can I'll give up, but if he can't he's got to go. That's what I've asked you all to come early for. I'm going to teach this factory boor a lesson."

Meanwhile Sam had arrived, during the confusion, and found the door locked against him.

There was another in the rear, however, which the boys had forgotten, and by this Sam entered, appearing suddenly in the midst of the unruly scholars.

"Ah, having a little sport, boys?" he said, good-naturedly, though he colored. "I must ask you, however, not to play in the school-room, but to confine your sports to the lawn outside."

"You ain't the boss here," said Jack, coming forward and towering nearly a head above Sam. "We don't have no factory cubs to teach us."

"Ah, and who may you be?" asked Sam, for he had not seen the bully on the previous day.

"I'm myself, and you've got to fight me if you're going to teach school here, my boy. You haven't got brains enough nor muscle enough to teach a kid, and we don't want no poverty-stricken factory boys lording it over us. Do you understand?"

Sam turned white, and bit his lip to compel composure. He stepped forward, and said quietly:

"You want me to teach you manners, do you? Such as you only learn through your physical feelings. Put yourself on guard. Let no one stir. I am going to fight this bully, since that is what he most desires."

"Come on," said Jack, defiantly, and the battle began.

Sam's factory life had strengthened his muscles, and, besides that, he had always been an adept in all athletic sports when at school, and had not forgotten them.

Jack Howard, whom Sam easily recognized by his features and by his knowledge of his own affairs, as his cousin, soon felt the weight of Sam's blows, and went down on the hard floor. He arose and doggedly resumed the combat, the boys looking on in great excitement.

Again Sam knocked his man down, and this time Jack did not feel inclined to get up immediately.

"Get up!" said Sam, sternly, and Jack, utterly cowed, arose.

"That will do now. Go to your seats, all of you. We will now resume our studies."

No further allusion was made to the trouble, and the lessons went on quietly and in order, the boys all feeling that Sam was their master. At noon, just before dismissing the boys, Sam called Jack up and said:

"Jack Howard, I want you to apologize for your impertinent language to me, and your insubordination this morning."

"I won't do it," growled Jack. "I'll leave the school first."

"Let it be so, then," said Sam, "and let us see no more of you. Boys, I did not come here to teach fighting, but I trust that you are satisfied that I am not deficient in that art. I want no more of it, however. I am here to learn as well as to teach, to learn forbearance and patience, and to teach you not only your lessons, but to be young gentlemen as well. The school is dismissed. Master Jack, I will inform your grandfather that you are expelled from this school at once unless you apologize."

"Don't care if you do," muttered Jack, doggedly.

"The school is dismissed," said Sam, and the boys filed out in good order, Jack being the last to leave.

After that there was no trouble, and as Jack Howard did not return the other boys did not care to receive the same punishment he had received, by any acts of insubordination.

That evening Sam was surprised by a visit from his grandfather, whom he had never seen, but whom he knew by having seen his portrait at home.

"Sam," said the old man, "allow me to tell you that you have taught me a lesson in your school, though I have not been to it. You have learned to resent an insult promptly; you have taught me that I have wronged you and yours all your life. Will you forgive me?"

"It is not for me to condemn you, grandfather," said Sam. "Your conscience must do that."

"I am going to make amends," said the old man. "I have wronged your mother and yourself. You are a noble fellow, and as much above that loutish grandson Jack of mine as the sky is above the sea. I have learned of the disturbance to-day, having come here unexpectedly, and I must say that you have acted nobly, while Jack has shown himself the bully I have always been told he was."

"I cannot allow him in the school," said Sam. "His influence is bad."

"Give up the school and bring your mother to live with us, Sam."

"I have engaged to teach the school," answered Sam, "and must go on with it. If my mother can forget the past, she may accept your offer, but I cannot."

"Well, think it over," said Mr. Howard, as he abruptly took his leave. Sam saw no more of him, and the school went on as arranged, Sam and the boys coming to an understanding, and everything going on under the brightest auspices.

Just before the close, in the early fall, several things happened in startling succession.

First, Simon Hardy was fatally injured in a railroad accident, and, before he died, confessed that Mr. Stickney had paid him in full the day before he died, but that the papers had not been made over, and there being no evidence, Hardy had been wicked enough to claim that he hadn't been paid. He also confessed that he had prevented the insurance money from being paid in order to keep the widow in his power, and at last obtain all she owned.

Restitution was made, and then came the sudden death of old Mr. Howard, leaving a will by which the bulk of his property was left to his daughter in trust for Sam, and only a pittance to his grandson Jack.

The latter went to sea and was lost in a storm, and so Sam and his mother were rich at last, our hero could go to college, his mother need work no more, and fortune smiled upon them, and all on account of Sam's school.

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